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THE ~~X. 26. 42~~
FULFILLING
OF THE 9 55 36
SCRIPTURE,

Held forth

In a discovery of the Exact Accomplishment of the Word of God in his Works of Providence, performed & to be performed.

*For confirming of Believers, and Convincing
Atheists of the present time:*

Containing in the End a few rare Histories of the Works and Servants of God in the Church of Scotland.

Corrected, and enlarged with several *Additions* both Doctrinall and Historicall.

THE THIRD EDITION.

Also an APPENDIX is added in the end, and an Index at the beginning.

Isai. 46: ver. 10. *My Counsel shall stand I will do all my pleasure.*

John 10: v. 35. *And the Scripture cannot be broken.*

Eccl. 1: ver. 16. *Men & Brethren, This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled.*



By R. Fleming

Printed Anno M. DC. LXXXI.

THE
EPISTLE TO THE

REVEREND

READER

It is like you may expect
some account of the
and occasion of this discourse,
that on so great and weighty
a subject it shall be
should venture abroad, es-
pecially in a time, when it
seems more late, and dis-
sent to keep silence, to be silent to hear, and
slow to speak, which seldom have an other chal-
lenge, the authors will say little for his ap-
proach herein. He hopes, he may
hope it more than he can hope, when he has
himself, this treatise, shall take to con-
sider, that treatise is the subject of the
new, yet hath not long been, and ex-
cite upon his mind, a more serious
enquiry, and search, with a respect to his own
case, to be persuaded that the Scripture divine
authority, that Godliness is not an empty name,
or shadow, but of an undoubted truth, which
is the object of all other light in the Gospel, and of



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THE
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READER,



It is like you may expect some accompt anent the rise and occasion of this discourse, that on so great, and weighty a subject so smal an *Essay* should venture abroad, especially in a time, when it seemeth more safe, and prudent to keep silence, to be swift to hear, and slow to speak, which seldome hath an after challenge; the Authour will say little for his apology herein, though he hopeth, he may finde it more easy to satisfy others, then he did himself, this fredome onely he shall take to confesse, that sometime it hath been matter of earnest, yea hath caused some tossing, and exercise upon his spirit, and pressed a more serious enquiry, and search, with a respect to his owne case, to be perswaded anent the Scriptures divine authority, that Godlines is not an empty name, or shadow, but of an undoubted truth, which indeed of all other things is the greatest, and of
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most near concernment, and truly anent that, this is a very convincing argument of the Scriptures certain accomplishment, hath not only set the red herring in the face, with a satisfying discovery, and impression thereof, as a most quiescing, and unanswerable demonstration of the truth, but he must also say, that by very remarkable confirmations from the Lord, this hath been so convincingly witnessed to his experience, as leaveth him under engagement, (were such a poor testimony of weight) to put his seal to the Word, that it falleth not to the ground, neither doth the promise of God fail.

It is a dark time now with the Church of Christ, which we see every where almost suffering and afflicted, whilst the whole earth besides seemeth to be at ease, Christians also, even beyond others, in their privat lot, tryed with very shap'ryals, though I think suffering may be the least of our fear at this day, whilst Adversities doth now appear on so formidable a growth, and hath a more threatening aspect then the rage, or violence of men: we see a sad decay likewise on the Churches abroad; Religion every where under a great consumption, and wearing out, that seemeth to have reached to in its vital parts, men search after an unusual way of sinning, as if they scorned to be wicked at a common and ordinary rate, prejudice easily taken up and entertained against the way of God, whilst the good man doth, alas! perish, without any affecting observation thereof, the choise, and

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of the earth pluck away, and none to fill their room; Christians' buffals now frequent, but the birth, and in bringing of such to the Church rare. This is indeed a sad subject and so much the sadder that few are found whose eye affecteth their heart; whose teares, and groaning seem to answer such a stroke, and suit which now is like to fall under our hand; but I shall leave this; prayer will be the best cure, and is this day more fit, then complaining, to turn unto him who looth the wayes of his People that he may heal them, and can prevent these wicked mercy; who seem least fit for the same; only two or three sad remarks of this time, I cannot altogether passe, which indeed are strange symptoms of the Churches present case, and danger. 1. To see men own the doctrine of sanctification, who yet can professedly disown, yea, make it their work by reproach to beget a prejudice against the practice thereof; Oh strange! to finde such as will dip their pen in gall against a tender and strict walk in Religion, and revile it in the power thereof, whilst they doe not deny these truths, and principles that necessarily oblige to such a tender practice; who in the most grave concerning duties of Christianity think it enough to charge their brethren with Pharisaical ostentation, and hypocrisy, whilst they must confesse these duties to be unquestionably binding; and that they can be no competent judges of such a challenge which the great witness of the heart and inward parts of

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of men can onely determine. 2. It is a sad remark also of the time that Protestant writers, professing the Reformed Religion, shall state themselves in opposition to the most concerning grounds thereof, such as imputed righteousness, and justification by faith, which are well called *Articuli flantis & cadentis Ecclesie*. I cannot have that charity, that it is from ignorance, but from a height of malice, that some of late reproach the Protestant doctrine, in this great fundamentall of justification, as if it pressed believing and resting upon Christ without respect to works and holiness; I confesse, we put not inherent righteousness in the room of imputed, though we assert each is necessary in their own place, the one in order to our right, the other in order to our actual and full possession of that right, yea, that holiness is absolutely necessary not only *antecedente preceptis*, sed *mediis*, and justifying faith doth necessarily require works, *sed non qua, & quatenus iustificat*, but sure, if these men grant we are justified by the satisfaction of Christ, they must needs confesse it is by imputation, since if the debtour be acquit by the cautioners payment, is it not by the imputation thereof to him? O sad! to see some put their invention upon the rack how to wound the Church (yea, a death wound it would be if they could reach their end) in that great truth of imputed righteousness, but it were best they denyed that sixt ver. of the 4. Ch. to the Rom. to be canonick Scripture, which none can read and shift, it being so clear, that the blessed

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man is there held forth, *unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works*, sure that cannot be inherent righteousness, else it were *contradiction in adjectum*. I professe these what ever they pretend, I must look on as adversaries to the Reformed Churches, and there is nothing more dangerous then a pirat going forth under a counterfeit flag. Is it not likewise sad, yea, astonishing to see Ministers now in these times, who are the expresse Embassadors of Christ given to the Church for her edification, stand so directly crosse to the very end of their work and Ministry, many of whom may be said that knowingly, and deliberately they oppose piety, that such should persecute, whose work is to feed, and wound in stead of healing, grieve the spirit of the Godly, who should be helpers of their joy, that none are a greater plague to corrupt the Church, and cause the sacrifice of the Lord be abhorred, then some of these who should be the salt of the earth, yea, none more obstruct the treaty of the Gospel, betwixt Christ and his Church, then Ministers who are called the friends of the bridegroom: Oh, what a strange and astonishing contradiction may this seem, but it should be no reproach to that holy, and excellent calling of the Ministry, for of such the Scripture hath expressly warned. I confesse it may be said no Atheist like an unsanctified Minister, yea, no Atheisme of so black a dye as theirs, who being still enured with holy things have yet no sense thereof.

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Now in this very dark houre, wherein the Church seemeth to have fallen in a deathlike slumber, and oh many of her Children in a deadly charge, that if we looked in an ordinary way, this wound might seem incurable, there are two great and concerning Quæries that I think should much take us up. The one is to know what the Scripture speaketh to the Church, what solid ground of encouragement is there held forth, for truly if we had not that sure testimony of the Word, we might fear Religion should quite wear out, & truth perish from the earth, but doth the Scripture speak peace? all then is well; that O that is sufficient security to put the Churches hope beyond further debate, though men should threaten, though the earth were overturned, and the foundations shaken, this is a determination above men, above all the rules of humane policy; yea, above the stand which sustreth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad, even that revealed Counsell of God, taking place anent his work and People.

I know some grave writers of these late times doe expresse their fear that the horrid wickedness and apostacy of the Gentile Church may at last resolve in the Lords departure and an universal darkness, that as the rejection of the Jewes made way for the Gentiles incoming, so their fall may as remarkably preceede that solemn return and restauration of the Jewish Church; it is also become the fear of many that Popery may yet once overrun the whole Reformed Churches before Antichrist fall: but since these sad thoughts,

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nor any appearance of the time, is no part of our Bible; we should learn neither to stretch our forbearing expectations, beyond that which the Scripture warranteth, and if the Lord be God, and give his very word, let us adhere to it and wait for its accomplishment. A second Query which is indeed no lesse concerning in such a time, may be asked, Duty, what so eminent hazard of the Church, and this great decay of Christianity doth most pressing call for, but this is a subject which requireth another pen, and too large, to touch with a passing word, yea, we may say the great want of these dayes is not anent the discovery of duty, but of the practice of known, and discovered duty; for the Scripture giveth a certain and distinct found in the darkest time, and hath not left us to doubtful enquiries and debate in this matter, I shall therefore leave it with a few things onely to be in the general considered. 1. It is sure, that every time hath its present duty, and the wise discernes thereof will know thence what they ought to do, what work and service the present circumstances of that time call for, shall the earth have its seasons wherein things are beautiful, shall the stork and swallow know their time, and yet Christians not know how to bring forth in their season, and discern the special time and opportunity of duty. 2. It is also sure, that every Christian in what soever capacity or condition, as he hath his measure and talent, so hath some work and opportunity of duty, where in they may serve the Lord

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to this generation, yea, it is not the meanest lot or condition that shutteth that door upon any, that they have no work for God, who desire to be faithful for him: Oh that in this threatening time when darknes is like to overspread the Church, it were more upon the heart of Christians to strive together, and contend by a serious improvement of their severall capacities to preserve Religion, and transmit the knowledge of Jesus Christ to the posterity, that the Christian parent, or Master of family did witnes more that great resolution in a time when many are drawing back; *but as for me, I and my house will serve the Lord.* 3. It is found that the most eminent and honourable service of the Church doth usually trust her in a low and suffering condition, when there hath been but little strength, many outward disadvantages, then both their call and furniture hath been most observable, to confesse the truth, to endure for the Gospel of Christ, to overcome by the Word of his testimony, a piece of service whereto more prosperous times doe not give such an opportunity, yea, it hath been in such a case, *Dan. 11: 32.* that these who knew their God, were made strong to do exploits. 4. It doth much concern us to put a high value on the truth, in a time when men must either lose it, or buy it, and O what a choise purchase is that which cannot be bought too dear, though at the rate of our liberty, estate, credit and reputation, yea with the losse of peace when it cometh in competition with it? For it is that great
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depositem once delivered to the Saints, the inheritance of our Children, that way where by Jesus Christ keepeth intercourse with his Bride on the earth, yea, the charter of all our mercies, and of our hope through eternity. 5. Though every line of divine truth is inestimable, yet it is sure there is a more pressing call for our adherence to that truth which is most controverted in the time, for it is the word of his patience and the matter of our present testimony, and it is known through all ages what a singular blessing hath followed the contending, and witnessing of a few for the truth in a spirit of publick defection, to keep it alive, when it was like to be swallowed up, yea, to effects above rational beliefs, *nam Athanasius contra totum orbem*, many such remarks have not been wanting. 6. I shall only add that which is alwayes necessary and binding, yet we may say in a time of the Churches hazard and suffering is more pressingly called for, even the study of Christian prudence, a duty convincingly necessary, for regulating of duties, according to the circumstances of the Churches case, which doth so nearly concern the interest and preservation of Religion, that I must say, a breach in that concord betwixt zeal and Christian prudence, when there is not some equal respect studied in the exercise of both, cannot but give the Church a sore wound, this is indeed a large theme, but shal onely point at in three things. 1. In our avoiding and being tender to give offence, not only to keep a distance from evil,

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ills but from the smallest appearance thereof, & doubtless they are bad casuists, and have little respect to the Churches edification, who make it their work, not so much to keep men from sin, as to shew them, *quam prope ad peccatum sine peccato accedere liceat*. 1. What a becoming fear is that, not to lay a stumbling block in the way of others, to grieve the weak, nor confirm such who use to found their prejudice against the truth, and way of God, upon the miscarriage of such as proceed the same. 2. This excellent study of Christian prudence hath a respect to men taking offence, as well as their giving it, to our being sober in judging, in personal reflections, not to cover up the infamies of others, rather, then to spread them, even for the Gospels sake, yea, and a hundred were our eyes, and cast a mantle on being taken down, who overtaken with the violence of some temptation may yet be serviceable to the Church, but especially this should presse in to a watchfulness, regard of any breach, and rent in the Church, and to study a healing spirit so far as is possible without prejudice to truth. 3. It is also a concerning piece of Christian prudence, how to walk wisely towards these who are without, as when it is justice against the way of God is now in fast backward growth, to study how we may convince, against ground, and by Christianly prudent and considered carriage, conciliat respect to the truths, and a holy commend holiness, and these who profess it, as the conscience of men, to study that rule of expediency much in things of themselves warrantable,

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table, what finnes and advantage, present circumstances may offer, or deny for edification, and promoting that great interest of the Gospel in our converse with men. I shall now cease to trouble you further, unless I would permit some few things with a respect to the subject of this following essay. 1. Should we not with wonder and astonishment look on this great record of the Scripture? by which the glorious Majesty of God doth speak to men, yea doth as certainly communicate his Counsel and minde, which may be more certainly, then if we had an immediat audible voice from Heaven. O could we have such ordinary thoughts of this, as if we consider how near God cometh therein to us. I think if there were but one corner of the earth, though in the remotest parts, where men might go and get a look of so wonderful and important a thing as Gods expresse will written and sent from Heaven to the earth, and our duty here, and blessings for ever, should we not think it worth our crossing the sea, and of the greatest expence of time or labour? It is truly a wonder how we can read and consider the scripture, without wondering. 2. It is a great concernment to know that the Scripture hath such a witness as experience, and that there is such a trade, and correspondence as this betwixt the Saints and the Word, which lieth not in the common road of the World. O what an empty thing should Religion be if it had not this word *experience* in its grammar, that secret

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and sure mark whereby the Christian knoweth the Scripture is of God, how thus the Lord hath opened sealed their instruction in a dark plunge, how life and power, invivifying influences, to the melting of their heart, have oft trysted them therein in a very dead frame; and now they know that verily God heareth prayer, now they are persuaded, and have learned by the crosse that he is indeed a comforter, yea, many can shew how by the Word their first acquaintance with the Lord did begin, how some particular truth, like a pickle of corn thrown in at their heart, by the blessing of the great husbandman was made to take life, and grow. 3. It much concerneth us to know what an excellent key the Scripture is to unlock that sealed book of providence, and that no other key can fit the same, many have tried another way but lost themselves on the search, and the more they prest by humane wisdom, they became the more dark. I truly think there is not a more satisfying discovery within time, than this, to trace divine truth back until we see its first breaking forth out of his eternal decree and council who is the Author thereof, how thence it taketh hold of the word which is the adequate sign, and declaration of his purpose, and then how the word taketh hold of his work and providence, where wee may see the face, and condition of the Church clearly written out through all the changes of time, how providence keepeth a certain and steady course even amidst the most perplexed motions and reelings of the earth, yea,

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yea, how all things even these which would seem most contradictory, run within that straight channel of the word, and cannot go without these bounds. 4. It is the principal, and most concerning Scripture-promises, that are only touched in this following discourse, these which carry along with them a clear continued series of the Churches condition through time, and shew the most remarkable changes of her lot, for it is clear that in diverse prophecies and in a different manner the Spirit doth point at one and the same thing: and truly it should cause no mistake or prejudice, that we finde several of the Scripture prophecies exprest in such dark termes, since the wisdom of God saw it fit that for a time these truths should be locked up, and sealed; but now light hath so far broken up with the event, as we may see how very significant and suitable to the matter these most dark enigmatick termes are. 5. We would upon no account shut our eares where the Scripture is clear, and giveth us ground to wait that the outgoings of the Lord for his people in their deliverance, and for the destruction of his enemies now in these last times, shall be very glorious, yea by some stately and stupendious acts of providence that he shall accomplish his judgement on Antichrist: neither must we take a prejudice at truth, because of the wilde fancies of many who would extend it beyond its bounds, or that near resemblance which the error of some in this time may seem to have thereto, for that hath been an old stratagem of the Devil to prejudge the World at
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Some of the truths of God, by setting up a counter-
terfeit thereto. I shall adde no more; onely what
recomp^t is given upon the close of the last argu-
ment of some remarkable passages of providence in
the late times, as herein the author hath some con-
fidence to professe he did endeavour what could be
attained for certainty of the same; and if any cir-
cumstance of these relations should be found a mi-
stake, he dare say before Him who is greater then
our conscience it was not the neglect of serious in-
quiry, so he must also premit, the inserting of
them was upon no further intent; then to be a wit-
nes to that truth of the Lords eminent appearance for
his Church in the last dayes: it would be of great use
and profit to the Church that some more fitly qua-
lified would th^y a more large collection of this
kinde. O that this might go forth with a blessing
from him who by the meanest thing can serve him-
self and promote the edification of his Church, and
that the Lord would raise some up with much of his
Spirit to make a further search and enquiry in this
great and weighty truth,

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Here are two means by which the blessed Majesty of God hath chosen, to reveal himself to the sons of men, his *Word* & his *Works*, which may be called these two great Luminaries, for giving light to the Church, though the one be greater, I mean doth more clearly shine forth, yet doth communicate light to the other; these men must not divide, which by so strait a tie the Lord hath joined; and by a mervellous correspondence hath set the one over against the other, that it may be easy to see his faithfulness, and the accomplishment of the *Scripture* therein, and indeed this is a great concerning truth, that calleth for a serious study, the solid perswasion of which should afford a sweet ground of repose, and rest for the soul, though the earth were all in a combustion round about, and give a satisfying answer to our most sollicitous thoughts, and fears: Now this being the intended subject of the following discourse, I shall first touch it a little in the general, and then hold forth some more particular grounds, whence it may be clearly demonstrated.

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I. That the *Scripture of God* hath a certain accomplishment here in the *World*, and what is to be understood by the same, I shall endeavour to clear in these things, which would be considered.

1. This is the very unfolding of the Lords decree, and secret purpose, the bringing forth of his work, now within time, to the view of Angels and Men, which was before him in the deep of his thoughts, and counsel from eternity; it is an opening up of the sealed book, which we must not understand to be that secret roll of election, and the book of life, wherein the names of the elect are write; but *Liber fatidicus*, the sealed Book of Gods dispensations in the World, shewing out his counsels and designs which should be brought forth in the after-ages of time; for as the Lord did fully comprehend what he was to do, and all that was to befall his Church, and People from the beginning to the end, long long before there was a begining, before the mountaines were formed, so hath he copyed, and written out his heart in the Word hereafter, wherein he hath most plainly shewed forth, what were his blessed purposes, and counsel of old, and thus the thoughts of his heart, his Word and his works do sweetly agree, and each one wonderfully answers to another, for his work doth bring forth, and accomplish his Word, that his decree, and counsel from all eternity may take place.

2. The Scriptures accomplishment is the transcript and writing of it over in providence, where we may see and admire how the Word doth shine upon all the pathes and footsteps of the Lord toward his Church in every age, and gives light to the same and what an evident reflection, his work hath again upon the Word, so that through the whole series and course of providence in the earth, we have a most exact portraiture, and image of the Scripture, answering one to another as face answers to face in the glasse, where it may be easy to discern the copy by the principal, and that resemblance which is betwixt the building, and that excellent pattern, and model, which is held forth thereof in the Word.

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3. The accomplishment of the Scripture is the very turning that, which was the object of our faith and contemplation, to be the object of our sense and feeling, it is the real birth, and bringing forth these truths unto the World in their appointed time and season concerning the Church, and particular Christians, which were hid in that womb of the promise, and many dark predictions of the Word; it is such a thing as giveth the promises and Prophecies, a visible being, yea bringeth truth so near within the reach of our senses, that we may even touch as it were and handle the words of life. O what an excellent interpreter is experience! *Tast and see*, for thus the serious Christian getteth a view of the Scripture and spiritual things, which the most subtil, and pearning eye of unsanctified Schoolmen cannot reach, yea, by the practice of truth, nearness to God, and retiring of the soul to him, hath oft got more light in an hour then others by many dayes, putting their judgement and invention upon the rack.

4. This is Gods own seal, which he putteth to the Word to confirm and ratify the same, I do not only mean that secret seal of the Spirit within, but something more external, that solemn testimony of his workes, whereby he doth every day appeal mens consciences anent his truth, for his workes are very manifest, whereon there is so clear an ingravening of his truth and faithfulness, that as the impresse and image of the seal is upon the wax, men may also see whose superscription and image that is, which doth appear on such, and such passages of providences.

5. This is something we are not to seek onely in the extraordinary acts of providence, or in any singular and eminent path of a christian experience, nay it doth shine forth in the smallest and most casual things that falls out, yea in every Page of that great Volume of Providence may be clearly read.

6. The Scriptures accomplishment is such a thing as concerns every Christian in his personal case to which his ordinary experience doth relate, whereof these have a large register, what of the Word hath been certainly pro-

ven in the several steps, and changes of their life, whose practice doth much ly betwixt improvement of the Word, and observation how it is fulfilled, such can witness how under a spiritual decay to be carnally minded is death, and when its well, that great peace they have who love Gods Law, they have oft found that in a strait he is a very present help, and in the way of duty that its surely good to draw near to him, and in the close of their life, can from many remarkable, and convincing providences declare the truth, and faithfulness of God; and truly whilst I speak here, of the Christians experience, I think its sad, and a great short coming, that there is not a more serious improvement of it for this end, which is a very concerning duty on such who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, & O what an excellent addition would this be to their testament, when they are to leave the World, to leave a testimony behinde them to the faithfulness of God in his Word, and thus put their seal to the same, from what they have oft proven by sure experience, for this should prove a singular help to strengthen others, and spread abroad the same; and good report of religion, yea, thus one generation should declare the works of the Lord to another, and transnit the memory of his goodness to succeeding ages.

7. This is something which not only the Christians experience doth witness, and in every time take place, but hath also a peculiar reference to these ages, and periods of times, wherein such particular truths, should have their accomplishment; for its true that the Prophets of old did not onely in their predictions, hold forth in general, the truth, and certainty of these things, which should fall out, but they also inquired and searched diligently anent the time to what or what manner of time the Spirit by them, did point at **1 Pet. 1:11**. For tis truly clear, that a piece of the Word, was under the Law to have its peculiar accomplishment, that part of it also, under the Messias Kingdom, in the dayes of the gospel, should be fulfilled, and we find a very concerning part there of belongs to their latter times; and these is betwixt such periods of time, and

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revolution of the Churches case, and the bringing forth of such a piece of the Scripture, to a performance, a very certain and undoubted connection. 'Tis true we do not yet well understand (which will be one of the last manifestations, the Church shall have at the end of time, when the mystery of God is finished) how to sort the event exactly to the Word, but it is sure (and were worthy of our study and observation) how every age hath something of the Scripture peculiar thereto, yea carrieth forward the Lords work and design a further step, may we not see how one age fulfilleth such a piece of the Churches sufferings appointed for her, and puts some great tryal and sad persecution over her head, which she was to meet with; whilst another age, carrieth her thorow another change, and giveth her a time of rest and breathing, how such a time bringeth Antichrist forward to his height, and such a following age begins the turn of the Churches case, yea every several period and revolution of time, still addeth something, to that excellent history of the Word, and Providence, which we have since the beginning, and bringeth forth something further into the world of the Lords counsel and design about his Church.

8. The accomplishing of the Scripture is such a thing, we are to look after, in a special way here, which concerns this militant, and traveling condition of the Church, for if the Scriptures were once fully accomplished, and the great mystery of God therein finished, there were then nothing more to do, his work of providence were at an end, and time should be no more; this is something, that is not here perfected at once, but is still gradually carrying on, and then shall be compleat, at the resurrection of the just, and second coming of the Lord, which is the last part of Canonick Scripture to be made out, when both his work and his word, and time, shall be all finished together, but while the saints are yet by the way, they have the written word and all these pretious promises therein, for present use and encouragement, for that is its proper work to take them safe thorow this labyrinth of the world, and when it hath brought them to land, it hath no more to

do, there will bethen no more need for a Christian to go to a promise, and adventure upon it, we shall then no more watch, with the watchmen in a dark, and stormy night, and hope for the breaking of the day, faith then shall not be at a stand, how such a word shall be made out, because of invincible difficulties in its way, no, then it hath done its work, and that which is written shall be swallowed up in that which is seen and enjoyed, all the streams of our encouragement will then lose themselves in a greater depth. O then its finished and done what all the promises prophecies, and threatnings of the Word, was bringing forth, and then no more need of something as a pledge and earnest in hand, to them who have the full possession of the inheritance, under whose feet the God of peace hath trod Satan and all their enemies.

9. I shall add this, the accomplishment of the Scripture, is something, which is not onely demonstrat to a Christian by sensible influences, and Gods secret working with his Spirit, but is made out to the observation of men, in the way of providence, and not onely witnessed by the internal evidence of the Spirit, but by an external testimony, which both rationally, holdeth this out to the judgement, and sensibly to the sight and experience, and this is the strongest and most full of all outward evidences, since the world must shut their eyes if they do not see it, and a Christian must deny what he both seeth and feeleth, if he deny a witness to this.

II. We would consider the *accomplishment of the Scripture*, as that which is the Lords peculiar work and design in the World, and that great business which is upon the wheels of providence amidst the various changes and revolutions, which are here within time, for bringing about whereof the blessed thoughts of his heart, are fixed and unalterable. This is indeed a grave and serious truth worthy to be more noticed and laid to heart by men, that the glorious providence of God which goeth throughout the earth, and doth particularly reach all things which come to passe, the

(small)

of the Scripture.

7

smallest as well as the greatest interests of men, in all these, doth move certainly and infallibly for the accomplishing of the Scripture, which is that great thing God hath before his eyes, for it is no personal interests of men how great so ever they be, that can answer this end, it is something beyond the Setting up of Kings, or overturning Kingdomes and Nations that he doth minde amidst these various changes, which are in the World, 'tis some greater thing, then that which we most notice, the Lord thereby designes, how such a party is advanced, and others brought low, for these things come within the reach of his care and providence, in so far as the fulfilling of the Scripture is therein concerned; the outmaking of the promises, and threatnings one syllabe whereof he doth more value then all the Crownes and Kingdomes of the earth, yea will not let it fall to the ground, though it should be at the rate of laying cities, and countries desolate, for its in this the Lord taketh pleasure, and exerciseth his blessed thoughts, even the bringing about what he hath spoken in his Word.

Now to clear this further, I shall hold forth these following grounds, whence it may appear.

First, The fulfilling of the Scripture, and written Word is so great a thing, and of such concernment, that the blessed Majesty of God, thought it worthy of a place in his heart from all eternity, this was before him in his thoughts and counsels of old; even that mervellous work which should be the after-product, and outmaking of his Word to his Church here within time, and surely was such a plot and contrivance that as no lesse then infinit love, wisdom and power, was required to bring it about, so it was well becoming the Majesty of God, and worthy to be the work of all the three blessed persons of the Trinity; O if we could go down a little to this deep, and see the wonders that are there, we would find that knowlege which usuallly lesseneth our admiration of other things, would heighten it here, it would be new to us every day to think how great and mervelous a thing that is which the Word is bringing forth.

The fulfilling

2. It is upon this, even the performance of the Word, that the present encouragement, and after blessedness of the saints doth ly, for the great interest of the Church is adventured upon the Word, and embarked with it, which should be lost yea their stock and treasure which is laid up in heaven, and all that a Christian is worth, which is layed up in the promise, were then perished, if the Scripture should want an accomplishment, the Godly man hath then run and laboured in vain, & these who are fallen asleep in Christ have dyed in a sad delusion, providence would be like the work of the foolish builder, who begun and knew not how to finish. O how heighly then is the Lord concerned in fulfilling of his Word? That he may perfect what concerns his People, and having surely payed the price put them also in possession.

3. There is yet more then the interests of Angels and men, yea then heaven and earth is worth that depends upon the outmaking of the Scripture; the glory of God and especially the praise of that great attribute his *faithfulness*, which he will have no lesse shine forth in the performance of his Word, then his power and wisdom in this great fabricke of the universe, and these marvelous productions of nature; for he hath magnified his Word above all his works, therefore is his heart greatly set upon this, even the bringing to passe what he hath spoken, which if in the least should fail, were no lesse then to make God a lyer, and falsify his Word, who is through all the Church known by this blessed name, *The God of truth*.

4. We would consider this, as that great trust, which is put in his hand who onely in heaven and earth was found worthy to open the Book of Gods decrees and counsels, and loose the seals thereof, a trust which the Lord did not adventure upon the Angels, the smallest promise, being such as requires no lesse then an omnipotent power and the arme of *Jehovah* to bring it about; for which end, he whom the father hath anointed, is gone forth as a mighty man who rejoiceth to run his race, that he may perform his Word, and through this great design in the administration

of the Scripture.

9

the Word of providence, about his Church and People which he
 Fedness of will not cease or give over, until the mystery of God in the
 Church is ad-Scripture, and all that was spoken by the Prophets be put
 t, which a close, when Heaven and Earth at the pouring out of
 laid up in the last vial, shall give that solemn shout and exclamation,
 ch is laye*it is finished, it is finished.* O if this were once fully per-
 Scripture-fect, there would be no more to do, then the Winter were
 hath then-ast, and the Summer come, the song of Moses and the
 a asleep in Lamb should be heard, because the bride hath made her
 would be-elf ready, then let all the trees of the wood rejoice, the
 and knew-ills break forth into singing, & all that is therein be glade,
 d concer-ecause the Scripture and great design thereof is fully
 fect wha-nished, & the day of the perfect liberty of the Sons of
 price put God is come.

5. The accomplishment of the Scripture is of such con-
 ernment that nothing can be done until it be once finished,
 for this, time must wait; the Sun must keep its course,
 and the ordinances of the Heaven continue as they are, the
 World is but a scaffold until this building be perfected, for
 this the grave doth still retain her prisoners and the dust of
 the Saints must yet rest in hope, the creation still groaneth,
 and the marriage supper of the Lamb is deferred, the cry
 of the souls under the altar get not a full return, until all
 that is written in the Word be fulfilled.

6. We would consider, this is the great thing which
 the Lord this day is carrying on, even the accomplishment
 of his Word, for this is most brought upon debate, of
 any thing besides; the World challengeth it, and the
 hearts of the godly do oft call it in question; the Atheist
 scoffs at it, and sayeth where is the promise of his coming,
 there are often to appearance insuperable difficulties in the
 way of its performance, therefore doth the Majesty of
 God so much concern himself in this, for bringing about
 of which he is in a holy way restless, and providence in an
 uncessant motion, until he hath done that which he hath
 spoken in his Word. It was for this cause that the Scrip-
 ture might be accomplished, that the Word was made
 flesh, & he who counted it no robbery to be equal with

God, did take upon himself the forme of a Servant, this is of such account in his eyes, that what time he speaks concerning a Nation or People, ere it come not to passe, he will rather put forth omnipotency, for the working of miracles, and change the very course of nature, for this, he will make the deep dry, make a way through the red Sea, and cause Jordan stand as in heapes, that he may keep promise to his People; if there be no way for bringing about his Word, but through a Sea of blood, and over the bones and carcasses of his enemies, he will do it, and bring it to passe, though Walled Cities, and the Sonnes of Anack mighty and strong should stand in the way thereof. Abrahams old age, and Sarahs dead womb, must not frustrat this, if the promise of the Churches restoration cannot be made out without a wonder shewed upon dry bones scattered at the graves mouth, this shall not be wanting; when God sayeth he'll bring down the enemies of his Church, if the dust of the ground should arise, down they must come; how many great designs of men hath this blessed design (that the counsel of the Lord may stand) crushed and broken? so that their work and counsel hath been as the Spiders web, when it stood crosse to this end, the godly need not fear, that he be not a present help in time of trouble, for he will keep his word herein, though the Earth should be overturned and the Mountaines cast into the midst of the Sea; O who hath resisted his counsel! What are all these vicissitudes and changes here in the World? But making way for the Scriptures accomplishment, with what desire doth he move towards this end? So that as in *Zachary* 6. v. 8. the instruments by him appointed for executing his judgement and the threatening of the Word, its said they have quieted his Spirit, his decrees are mountaines of brasse, which are unchangeable; the thought of his heart take place in all generations, therefore the Word which is gone forth out of his mouth shall not return in vain, but the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

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II

III. *The accomplishment of the Scripture is a truth very clear and manifest*, whereof none can pretend ignorance, if they do not shut their eyes, and force their own light from the fear of such a discovery; for the obstruction doth not ly in the darkness of the object or that men cannot see this, since we have it so clearly held forth in great and legible charecters, nay, we must say the cause is culpable, there is much of the will in it, which renders such an ignorance without excuse. O that this should be so little looked after, a matter of such near and weighty concernment, when there needs not an other demonstration, but *come and see* the works of the Lord through the earth, for he hath here so far condescended to his People, to bring the truth near, that they even feel and grip the same, yea doth in a manner say to every one as to Thomas, *put in your hands*, touch the Word, and truth thereof, and be no longer faithless, taste but & see, that the Lord is good and that he is true in what he hath spoken.

We are indeed to look after a more clear, and full discovery of this truth the nearer the Church is to the end of time; there is a labyrinth as it were of turnings and windings, through which we may see the Word oft brought, so as we lose sight thereof, and are ready to stagger at its performance; but its as true that the most eminent confirmations, the saints ever had of this truth, hath been after greatest shakings thereanent, yea, the Lord hath in all ages, so visibly sealed his Word by its performance, that we may say, can he be a Christian and a stranger to this in his experience, and a serious on-looker on providence and the dispensations of the time, wherein he lives, and a stranger to it, in his observation; yea, can any be so wholly brutish, not to discern a thing so clear that oft-times these, who run, may read?

But to speak a little more to this I shall here point at some things, that may shew how manifest this truth is.

1. Is it not very clear, which we see every day, brings to light? A truth so conspicuous, both in Gods ordinary way with his Church, and in the several steps and passages of

of

The fulfilling

of a Christians life : For these mercies which bring the Word, and promise to passe, are new every morning, and cry aloud, if we could hear, great is his faithfulness, but of this is indeed tryed : and needs there more, to convinceably w a blind man, that his sight is restored to him, but that he certainly seeth ; sure they never wanted confirmations here who do but seriously seek to be confirmed.

2. Is it not a clear truth, which not onely is found upon the exactest tryal ; but is witnessed by such who ever tryed it in their most pressing straits, and extremity ; for its in the darkest night this truth hath most brightly shined, and these more remarkable ventorious acts of faith, have they not still brought forth most convincing experiments thereanent ? We may say there is none can give a better account of the performance of the Word, then these who against hope, have beleevd in hope, that this never made them ashamed.

3. Is it not also clear, whereof there are such solemn extraordinary confirmations in all ages ? For that his name is near, his wondrous works declare, I am sure no time could ever deny its witness, how by great convincing providences, both of judgement and mercy it hath been so sealed, as hath forced Atheists to keep Silence, no time wherein the Church had not cause to erect a pillar, and engrave thereon, *We have seen with our eyes* the great and wondrous works of the Lord, by which he hath witnessed the truth of his Word.

4. Is it not a manifest truth which even in the most strange, and dark footsteps of providence, so clearly shineth forth, these which at the first look are an astonishment, and hard to be understood, yet after most clearly verify the Scripture, that whilst the Lords way goeth out of our sight, yea, out of the ordinary road of his working, through a labyrinth of turnings, and crosse dispensations, yet at length, it doth evidently clear, and disintangle it selfe, which men may oft see break forth as the sun out of a dark cloud, that shineth the more brightly, the more it was obscured.

of the Scripture.

13

5. Is it not very clear which can be demonstrated by such
bring the visible effects in these great changes of the World? For the
y morning, fulfilling of the Scripture, is not a thing hid in a corner,
aitfulness, but oft published in the house tops, that men may see legi-
convincibly written, upon Kingdoms and Nations, the desolate
but that he ruins, and devastation of cities and houses great, and fair
ations here which are made to be without inhabitants, so as these who
go by may clearly read the cause, and bear that witness,
found upon *Lo there is sin visibly punished according to the Word.*

6. How clear is this, which we have so evidently dra-
ever tried wen out, and acted over in a Christian walk? For what else
; for its in is the spiritual conversation of such, these visible effects,
ained, and evidences of the grace of God all along a Christians
have they way, but a visible convincing witness to the performance
ers there- of the word? Hath not such a very audible Echo, and re-
ter account sound to that which is the great drift, and Scope of the
who against Scripture; where men may see the Bible turned over into a
made them practical history, written forth, and acted on the heart,
uch solemn and conversation of the saints, as on a stage, or theatre:
t his name the Word living, speaking, moving. and clearly diffusing
re no time it self through all the veins, as it were, and conduits of
ncing pro- a Christians life, so that if the truth, and reality of the gra-
th been so ce of God be a thing manifest, and unquestionable, we
, no time must also see therein the real performance of the Scripture.

7. I shall adde we may clearly see how one piece of the
Scripture, is nothing else but the punctual fulfilling, and
accomplishment of the other, how that which was shado-
wed out by dark types, under the Law, and held in a Pro-
phesy, through the Old Testament, is written before our
eyes in a plain, and real history in the New Testament,
and that the gospel is only a fulfilling of the Law, and the
Prophets.

IV. Though its very manifest and by undenyable proofs
can be demonstrated that the Scripture hath a real accom-
plishment and doth certainly take place, in the constant
course of providence here in the World, that I am sure if
men do not darken themselves they can be no strangers to
such

such a thing, yet we must say. *This truth which most nearly concerns us, is to the most of men, (even such who seem to give a large assent to the Word) a mystery and dark riddle.* There are few who do but enquire if there be such a thing, if the promises and threatnings have indeed a certain outworking, few do seriouſlie ponder the providences of God in which the truth and faithfulness of the Word shineth forth, that they may thereby be further confirmed, we see that many, (alas too many) the great concernments of the Law and everlasting happiness are a trivial and an impertinent business, this is a truth the World doth passe without regarding: such as sport at Religion when they come to earnest here, dare not stand before this discovery, it concerneth them much to reconcile their principles with their practice, their fear begetteth hatred, and both put their wit and invention on the rack, how to dispute away any remander of a conscience, to imprison their light, and under the pretext of reason, run down godliness, and the absolute necessity thereof, yea, besides doth not sensuality wherein many wallow, and steep themselves, so dull and drowne the soul, put such an interposition of the Earth betwixt them, and this truth, as wholly darkens it? And, oh, how sad that many having a large profession to be Christians scarce ever knew, what it is to put the Word to an essay, and tryal in the concernments of their life, to have their light followed with experience, wherein the very truth and reality of Religion lieth.

To clear this, I shall hold forth some things which may shew how little this truth of the Scriptures accomplishment is known, or studied by the most of men.

The abounding of so much Atheisme that there are so many who not onely disclaim the practice of that Religion they seem to profess, but do state themselves in most direct opposition to the rules, and principles thereof, these to whom the Scripture is but as a Romance, yea, doe onely converse therewith to prove their wit, and parts in impugning the same; who avowedly mock at the judgements, and providences of God; I confess these may be reckoned

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Monsters, a very prodigy in the time, wherein they live, though alas, it is not the least part of the World; and which is strange, we see the most horrid Atheists do usually abound, where the light of the Gospel hath most shined, the savage places of the Earth bring forth no such monstrous birth, as are hatcht within the visible Church, for thus the judgment of God putteth a blacker dye on them then others; O what a terrible sound should the fulfilling of the Scripture, have in mens eares, if they once came to have serious thoughts thereof, since they cannot admit this but they must certainly read their own sentence of death, which a few dayes shall put in execution, and if the Scripture be true, they are then unspeakably miserable.

2. That indifferency which we see amongst men about Religion, and the most concerning truths of Scripture doth shew how little this is known or laid to heart, whence there is such a generation who do not professedly deny the Scripture, yet can turn it over in a Schoole probleme, and wonders that men should ingage so far upon it; it is not that it is hid from them, but they truly choise to hide themselves from it, as more suitable to that interest they drive, that the truth of God, should be rather a matter of opinion then of faith, a thing which they would dispute, but not beleve; but, O, what other thoughts would a clear sight of this cause? That within so few dayes, the truths, and threatnings of the Word, shall be sad earnest, the fulfilling whereof no sharpness of wit, nor subtil arguments, will be able to evade.

3. That there is so much barren theory of Divine truths in the World, with so little serious Christian diligence, doth it not sadly witness how small acquaintance men have with this truth? Whence we see so great a part of these who professedly acknowledge the word, and are daily conversing with it, yet can give no other account thereof but report, so many that can satisfyingly discourse of the Scripture, could never put their seal to it, that *God is true therein*, whence are so many great Schoole divines, and able Ministers for parts, such visible Atheists in their way, and practi-

practice? Is it not, they really judge Divinity, and Religion, rather a science, and matter of speculation, than a matter of sense, and feeling, which men should more live than speak, & cannot be known without experience the true end of knowledge; but, O this cannot be found in bookes, men will not meet with it in a throng of choicest notions, it confoundeth the wise, and disputer of this world, whilst the meanest, and most simple Christian of knoweth more then these of greatest parts.

4. The great Hypocrisy which is in the world, I mean within the visible Church, doth too clearly shew that the truth is little thought on, or laid to heart; for what is that false shew, and appearance (which we may say is not a sin, but the very sinfulness of sin) Is it not the height of Atheisme? And a real contradiction in their practice to this, that the Scripture of God is true and will have an unquestionable accomplishment; O could any be so monstrously irrational, to drive this poor plot how to appear that which they are not, to be at such paines to act the part handsomely of a serious Christian, to personate his tears, and grief, his spiritual frame, his zeal for God, if he did think gravely on this truth, and did beleeye the threatening of the Word; that they will surely take place and be within a little no complement, but sad earnest, and that he is every hour standing under that Scripture-wo against Hypocrites? I am sure it would make his very hair stand upright, his joynts loose; and his thighs smite upon another, could he but seriously think upon this.

5. These unwarrantable wayes which in a time of tryal men take for their escape, may witness this, that the world they do not judge a sure ground to adventure on; whence is there hesitation in suffering times? From that day many taking there leave of Christ, who have rather choised sin then affliction; O is it not? They judge the testimony of the God of truth is not sufficient security to carry them through such a strait, & are not fully perswaded that it must come to passe what he hath promised, for if this were, they should reckon it their greatest safety to embarque their interest

rest on so sure a ground, and with much quietnes repose their soul, and disburthen their care by putting it over on the word.

6. What doth the frequent discouragement and uncomfortable walk of the People of God speak forth, doth it not witness how little they are in earnest with this great truth of the Scriptures accomplishment or establisht thereanent? What meaneth these distrustful feares, and perplexed complaints: if their eyes be but open to know, they have such a well as the promise of God, at their hand; how is it that the smallest straites are so puzzling, and ready to outwit them, that they so usually stumbe at the crosse? And as things from without doe appear, their encouragement made to ebb and flow? Is not here the cause? That they stagger at the promise whilst probabilities in some visible way, do not go along for its performance: Its truly easy to have some sweet notions of faith at a distance, but whilst the trial comes near, upon such a close approach, that there is not an other way, but to put the whole streesse of their particular interest, on the Word, and on it alone, many are then at a stand, because they are not thoroughly assured that though the earth should be overturned, there is an absolute necessity for the promise of God to take place.

Now from these things may it not appear that this grave truth of the Scriptures accomplishment is but little known, or studied? I confesse we may think on it with astonishment, how a matter so nearly concerning is not more our work, there are indeed many things worthy to be known, but our short life can scarce allow time, or give leasure for the study thereof, but O this, though we had only two dayes to live, I think might require the one, to be sure, and perswaded anent the truth of that whereon our heaven, and eternal blessednesse lyeth, to which we must lay the dead grip, when we are in the passage at that strange step betwixt time, and eternity. O what a wonder, how rational souls who walke on the border of the greatest hope, and fear imaginable, can yet be so unconcerned there anent, such serious thoughts might force men to retire, and go sit alone; and truly

these things gravely considered may seem strange and hard to reconcile.

1. That there is such a thing as the very Word and Testimony of God, this day upon record, wherewith we have so much to doe, which doth offer it self to mens tryal, and exactest search, and yet we put it so little to that touchstone, that we may know it upon an other account, then report or hearfay.

2. How in a matter of such high importance as salvation through all eternity, and the ground of this hope men should take the truth on an implicit faith, or satisfy themselves, with a common assent thereto, as though it were enough to witnes our beleeving the same, because we did never doubt or call it in question, I am sure men would not be so lax, and so easy to satisfy in the most common interest they have here in the World.

3. How can men render to others a reason of their hope when it is enquired, who did never ask a reason of this at themselves, or will these seal the truth with their blood, who never had it sealed upon their heart by experience.

4. Whence is it that men can have comfort in Scripture who are not well grounded in the faith thereof? Indeed these who are solidly perswaded anent the truth, and its certain out-making may have much joy and peace, whilst they know the ground of their confidence can bear up any streffe or burden they lay upon it, and for what end did the Lord witness the certainty of his Word by two immutable things, wherein 'tis impossible for him to lie, but that from so sure and strong a ground, his People might have strong consolation?

5. How can any think to adventure their immortal soul upon that whereon they fear to venture an outward interest, or put over their dearest things in his hand and keeping who could never say, they know in whom they beleeved?

6. May it not seem strange that men can beleeve a certain performance of the Word, and promises, and not be more deeply affected therewith? O is this true, shall it surely come to passe, and not one jot thereof fall to the ground,

of the Scripture.

19

and should it not cause us awake in the night, and bear us more company? Ought we not to think our selves at a losse that day wherein we take not a turn in the meditation of divine truth, if we be sure that these must take place?

7. I would adde, if this be indeed the Scripture of God which surely hath an accomplishment. O how are we so little Christians? Why doth mens walk, so sadly jarr with so great an hope? What manner of persons should these be, that are perswaded within a little these heavens must passe away as a scroll, the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth be burnt up? I think if this will not presse home on men to be serious and diligent, they must be in a very sad lethargie.

V. *The accomplishment of Scripture is a most clear, and undeniable witness of its divinity, that it is his Word who is not like man to ly, or the son of man to repent, and hath this as its distinguishing character, that not one syllable thereof falls to the ground: This is the undoubted priviledge of God, and of him alone, to foresee things contingent which are many ages after to fall out, and hath no dependance upon necessary, and natural causes; and truly, this may be a convincing argument, yea, we may say of all external testimonies is the greatest; but its strange to think what a generation there is who can sport at the Scripture, and question the truth thereof, who yet did never once seriously enquire if such a thing be true, else so clear a witness might stare them in the face, such a party we should look on with compassion, its also sad to think at how poor a rate far below their allowance, many of the Saints doe here live, because there is so little of that excellent and more noble Spirit, to search the Scripture for their further comfort and establishment thereby.*

It is true this blessed record doth bear witness to it self, and is known by its own light whereon there is such a visible impresse of the glorious God, such convincing marks of its true descent, as may throughly shew whose it is, and how far it exceeds all humane invention, and thus by a clear

manifestation of the truth, doth commend it self to mens consciences as a safe ground whereon they may repose their soul: It is also clear, how wonderfully the Scripture hath been preserved, and the original copyes thereof kept through all ages, that whatever small variation there may appear as to some *Apiculi*, which in some places hath caused divers readings, yet, in any necessary or saving truth the greatest Criticks will confesse they do not in the least vary, and it is known (wherein we are to adore that special providence of God) that the Jewish Church, to whom this sacred *depositum* was delivered, did with such exact and singular care look to the same, even in the least tittle, or letter thereof this being the great work and study of the Mazorites, from one age to another, to see to the preserving of that great record, from being in the least vitiated, or corrupt; and the greatest adversaries of the truth cannot possibly deny that agreement betwixt these many original copyes, in the whole substance, which may be very convincing to the World. And do not men see, how marvellous the whole frame of the Scripture is? What a correspondency betwixt all the parts thereof, that nothing in it doth in the least, vitiate the proportion, & beauty of the work, but all along it an evident tendency to advance holinesse and conform the soul to God: With a wonderful consent and harmony in answering to this great end, we see the simplicity, and plainness of its style, yet backt with a convincing Majesty, and authority upon the conscience; yea besides it hath been attested by miracles that were great in themselves, famous in their time, transmitted to the Church in after ages, with unanswerable evidences of their truth, that not only the witnes of the Word, but other pressing, and rational grounds may let us see there could be no deceit, or imposture therein.

These are a great testimony to the truth, but I may say, on very sure ground that, next to that great witnes of the Spirit, there is no argument more convincing to reach Atheisme a stroke and thoroughly satisfy an exercised spirit who may be plunged anent this great thing, the authority of the Scripture, then a clear discovery of its performance whilst
under

under the assault of such a temptation, if this be the very word of God, they may but retire within, & then turn their eyes abroad in the World, to see what a visible impresse of the Word is stamped on every piece of the work, and providence of God, Now for further clearing I would offer these few things.

1. First the accomplishment of the Scripture is a very publick testimony from Heaven to its divinity; whilst the Lord by his works through the earth which are done in the view of Angels and men doth solemnly avow that this is his Word, for we must say his work within on the hearts of his People, & without about the Church is such, whereat men, yea all the magicians of the earth may stand amazed, and confesse that nothing lesse then a divine almighty power can accomplish the same.

2. This gives in the witness of all the generation of the righteous, who from the beginning have proven the truth thereof, yea sealed by the blood of many excellent Christians, some of whom though they could not well dispute for it, yet had so strong a demonstration of the truth within, as made it an easy work to dy for the same.

3. This doth clearly shew the Scripture is an unchangeable rule of righteousness, that alters not but takes place in all ages, whence such as are wise to bring providence in to the Word, and compare the experience, and remarks of one time with another, may have a great reach, & be thus led in a sure path as to the foreseeing of events.

4. This also doth demonstrat that it is his Word who doth rule and guide the World, and hath a sovereign dominion over the same, whilst we may here see such remarkable events which both in the present, and in former times have fallen out, as may shew a power, that can reach the greatest with a stroke, shake the most established Kingdomes and even over the belly of insuperable difficulties, accomplish the Word, yea that surely the Spirit of the wheels which moves them is from him whose Word this is; for it is not more clear that these courtaines of the Heavens are stretcht forth over the earth, then that the Scripture is stretcht out

over the whole work and frame of providence, so as all the motions, and steps thereof even of the most casual things that fall out hath a visible tendency to accomplish these ends which the Scripture hath held forth.

5. This clearly sheweth it must be his Word who hath foreseen all things that were to befall the Church, and the various changes and adventures of every Christians life through time, whilst it is so wonderfully shaped, and suited to every new tryal of the Church, as if intended only for that time and to every case of a godly man, as though it had been alone write for them.

6. This also sheweth that he who is the author of the Scripture and hath framed that admirable piece must have some immediat correspondence with the Spirit of man, knoweth our sitting down, and rising up, yea doth search the heart, and the reins; for experience can tell how the Word is directed to the heart, doth reach the most inward contrivances thereof, doth so clearly reveal, and open up a Christian to himselfe, that we may say of a truth, he is the God of the Spirits of all flesh, and one greater then our heart whose it is.

7. I shall further adde, the fulfilling of the Scripture in the experience of the Saints, doth shew it is not a dead letter, but hath power, and life; and there must be an enlightning quickning Spirit, that surely goeth along with the same, this clearly demonstrates something above words, yea above nature in the written Word, that can make such a change upon the soul, give life to the dead, open the eyes of the blind, yea, can turn a lump of earth, that formerly tended downward, now, without any violence to move from a principle of life towards God as the sparks flee upward.

VI. *The accomplishment of the Scripture is a most pleasant, and truly delectable subject*, worthy of our Serious thoughts, and study; for here is held out the highest truth for the judgement to contemplat, the truth and faithfulness of God in the Word, and here is also the greatest good for the affections to embrace, and delight in, as that wherein our whole

of the Scripture.

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whole happiness is certainly wrapt up; it is undenyable that it is the godly man, who knoweth best what true and solide pleasure is; which he doth not losse, by turning his heart from the creature to God, but maketh a blessed exchange; O, how far doth the joy, and delights of the soul exceed these of the senses, and the delight of a Christian how far doth it surpasse that of a natural man, even in his best estate; and sure this pretious study of the dayly performance of the Word, is one of these paths of pleasure, which would bring in more solide ioy to the spirit in some few houres, then some years wallowing in the carnal delights of the flesh, which is but as pleasure in sport, but quickly turneth to grief in earnest; it is one of the great mistakes of the World, that religion tends so much to sadden, and disquiet the soul, nay it is certainly the want of this, because we are so little truely religious, when we scruffe over our duety; and take but a passing look of the wayes and work of God in the World, then it is indeed very affrighting, and unpleasant; but when in a more Christian way, we doe seriously look thereupon, and get our heart near God, taking the Word alongst with us, O how delightful, & ravishing a sight will this be! I truely think though there were not a command, though it were no duety, nor such advantage in the study of this grave truth, yet that joy, and refreshment which the soul would find in such a diligent search, in going down into this blessed deep, should invite us thereto.

Bus when I speak of this, what a sweet, and delightful subject, the performance and out-making of the Scripture is, it must be understood that it is so only to the saints, and it is no wonder the World keep at such a distance with it, for this is a truth they can not bear, they hate it, which, as Micajah, doth Prophecy alwayes hard things, and carrieth a message of death to them, which doth foretell their approaching ruin, and should cause them all tremble, the knowledge whereof must encrease their sorrow, and disquietness, yea, cause them cry out, O, doe not, torment us before the time, for they are surely undone, and

ruined if the Scripture of God be true, and hath a performance; But O what pleasant and refreshfull tydings, doth this carry to a Christian. What a sweet view doth he here get of the inheritance, and blessed estate of the saints, which may cause such an exclamation, how great is that goodness which is laid up for these that fear thee!

To demonstrate this, I shall hold out some things, from which we may see how delightful a subject, the accomplishment of the Scripture is for a Christian to study.

1. Serious converse with this grave truth leadeth forward to practice, and thus helpeth to bring down theory to experience, which is the most sweet, and desirable of all other demonstrations; that we can have of the truth of the Scripture, and maketh our light clear, and pleasant to the taste, turning the exercise of our judgement, and reason thereanent into sense, and feeling; we are then made to see what a difference there is, betwixt that discovery which a spiritual man (whose religion is his practice) hath of this Word, and the cold winter-light of natural understanding that hath no heat or warmenes therewith, which is as great a difference as betwixt hearing of such a thing by report, and seeing it with our eyes.

2. This blessed study, how the Scripture hath certain accomplishment, would help to read the Word with another kinde of pleasure. O what representation should then the truths and promises thereof have to the godly man. It would be as one going in to look over his charters, & the great things therein contained, which he doth not in the least debate, or question, since they are past the seals, and fully ratified, & now considereth all which is promised as as his own, which he lookt former times upon, but as a common thing, whilst he made not earnest of the certainty, thereof, and what an interest he had in the same. O when he readeth that promise of a new heaven and earth, & that glorious estate which abideth the Saints! He cannot turn his eyes, & thoughts so easily off it, but is made to stand, and wonder, that so great a thing, that will make such a marvellous change in his condition, is even shortly

to come to passe; how sweet, and pleasant is it for such to turn over these promises, who can set to his seal, and bear this witness, that he hath as really proven the truth thereof by sure experience; as he knoweth he hath a real being; surely the Bible is an other thing to these, then it is to the great part of men; who only make it the subject of their contemplation.

30 In this blessed study we should have much laid to our hand to observe; and our observation made sweet, and pleasant to us; for there we might see, how all the paths of the Lord towards his People, are mercy and truth; this would give us a refreshful diary of providence; how in such a plucking strait we found the Word sensibly sealed; what observable confirmations we have had therewith; at such a time; and in such a condition, the after-recounting of which in an hour of trial; or in the evening of our life, would exceed these greatest pleasures, the Men of this World can have in looking over their gold; and greatest treasures; which for many years they have been laying up.

31 In the serious study of the dayly accomplishing of the Scripture; we should have a most satisfying view; and prospect of what God is doing up and down the earth what purposes and designs he hath on foot; and how things here beneath do work together for carrying on of the same; we should see what an excellent, and curious piece of work this frame of providence is; which the more it is considered; it will be the more a wonder, how perfect in all its various collours, what an observable concurrence there is there, how several discords; which we see here, do yet agree with one consent, for the compleating of Gods designs, which is still going on, and whilst we think there must be some disorder amongst the wheels, we are made as yet to see that this confusion, was an excellent step of providence confounding the wisdom of men; every piece of his way being so knit to another, as discovers to such who make this blessed truth their serious study, a most rare texture beyond the reach, and up-taking of the greatest gifts that ever was. Here also we might go up to that

watch-tower of Christian observation, and from thence, take a grave look of Gods way, and lay his work in the World to the Scripture, as the measuring line, where we should see (and find the sight thereof very pleasant) how the Word every day takes place, doth issue through all the veines, and arteries of providence, each line whereof is so exactly drawn, as by a pincel in some skilfull hand, to that great exemplar of the Scripture; here we might discern these eminent examples of judgement, and mercy that in every age are set before us, how wicked men prosper for a time, yet have a dreadful issue, & are suddenly cast into destruction, they spread as a green bay tree, and within a little their place cannot be found, how the godly are oft sore afflicted, yet flourishing as the palme tree. and the more they are depressed, the more they grow; how the enemies of the Church are oft lifted up for a sorer fall, & the Church brought low, in order to her greater enlargement; how judgement findeth out sinners, and is oft exactly proportioned in measure and kinde to the sin, & on the other hand how integrity is sore tossed oft, yet still falleth upon its feet, and overclouded that it may shine more brightly after; how the threatnings of the Word do visibly overtake Kingdomes, and Nations, bring down great houses, causeth those brought up in scarlet embrace the dunghil, and letteth not the hoary head of cruel and wicked men goe oft into the grave in peace, and again to consider how the Lord forsaketh not his People, but sheweth respect to their way, the good man walketh in his integrity, and his seed after him is blessed. O, how sweet an exercise were this for a Christian even to losse himself in!

5. From thence we might in a great measure discern what of the night it is with the Church, if there be any evidences that it is neer day; & what such a sinful case doth threaten; we would be skilful to feel the Churches pulse, & thereby find what symptomes there are of life or death, & perceive a dark cloud of judgement casting up, when it is but like an handbreadth; surely this study should make us wise to know the times, and what we ought to do therein; for amongst these

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these various events which fall out in every age, the Lords way is constant with it self, and with his truth, if we be right onlookers.

6. Here we should have a most pleasant and clear view, how the Scripture of God, comprehendeth the whole state of the Church, from the beginning to the end of times; that it is a most full, and perfect register of all the vicissitudes, and alterations, which are to go over her head whilst in a militant condition; and doth also most exactly point out these occurrences, and remarkable events, which fall out in the ordinary way, and course of providence; that we may read them as evidently in the Word, as we see them with our eyes fall out in the World; for in following this study, we should clearly see how the Scripture bringeth the Church to light, out of the womb of an eternal decree, and doth trace it from the first promulgation of the Gospel after the fall through these dark times before the flood, whilst it was but in families, and through that long trial in Egypt, and all its settled, and flourishing condition in Canaan, and carrieth her forward through all the several changes of her case, under her following decay, and in the times of the captivity, even to the manifestation of Christ, and dawning of the gospel; and as it thus taketh in within its reach, the whole estate, and the special events, which did befall the Church under the Law, so we may see how the Scripture also followeth the Church, through the whole time of the gospel, and bringeth her as a grain of mustard seed from a day of small things, until it bring her to perfection, taketh her as it were by the hand from her infancy, and goeth with her through all the turnings of her condition; through that long, and dark night of Antichrists reign, pointeth clearly out her condition, & various assaults that shee should endure in that time, and that blessed victory which shee should after have, though not all at once, but gradually over her enemyes, and that the Word, and the Church do never part, but one walketh step for step with the other, until it bring her safe to land, and as it were put her off its hand, and guard, at the coming of Christ.

7. This

7. This would also help us to sweet thoughts, and give us matter of a song in the saddest night of the Church in condition, when we see how Gods great design in the World is the accomplishing of the Scripture, and know that his ends which he hath held forth therein, cannot be frustrat, it would serve to silence all our complaints, without wondering at Gods way, and triumphing in the works of his hands; we should not then be affrayed of evill tydings, if a stormy time would not outwit us; being perswaded that though the earth should be overturned, it shall be surely well with the righteous, the Church must flourish, and all her enemyes be found lyars, because he is faithfull that hath promised, whose Word will as surely come to passe as the sun doth return after a dark night.

VII. It doth now more specially concern the godly in the latter times, to study the great truth of the accomplishment of the Scripture, and set about a serious inquiry, and search therein as a truth that shall yet be in a further measure discovered, and opened up, the nearer the Church is to the end of time which may thus appear.

1. Herein is the Word exprest, that one piece of the Scripture, which from former ages was sealed up, should in the latter dayes be clear, and easy to understand, Dan: last Ch. 4. ver. 9. The seal is there put on; but go thy way Daniel for these Words are closed, and sealed to the time of the end, but Rev. last Ch. and ver. 9. We have that bar taken off, seal not the sayings of the Prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand; because then the time did draw near, to which a more full discovery, and opening up of the Scripture was reserved, and a more large manifestation of the Spirit beyond former ages. Now by the last dayes, we are not only to understand, the whole time of the gospel, though it is thus tearmed in the Scripture, but the latter part of these last times, which is more especially pointed at, even the close, and evening of time, that last Epocha, and period of prophetick chronology, to which a greater accomplishment of Scripture Prophecies is reserved.

1. This also is expressly promised that in the latter dayes ;
 and given the Church shall have a more full discovery of this truth,
 Church how the Scripture is verified, *Dan. last Ch. v. 4.* many shall
 sign in it run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased, which in-
 and know ease as it clearly pointeth at the last times, and that bright
 cannot be by the Church shall have, when Israel shall be brought in to
 ints, with Christ, it doth also point at, and promise some greater light,
 orks of his and a more full opening up of the mysteries of the word, &
 ydings, fulfilling thereof, for the former part of the Chapter shew-
 vaded that in, that increase of knowledge doth relate to these thing
 I be surely which were before sealed; we wait and believe the further
 rish, and the accomplishment of this promise to the Church beyond all
 thfull that we have yet seen, that many Scripture truths now dark, and
 to passe, shall be made so clear, as shall even cause us to won-
 der at the grosse mistakes we once had thereof, yea, that after
 generations shall have a discovery, and uptaking of some
 prophecies now obscure, which shall as far exceed us, as this
 age doth go beyond former ages, which comparatively we
 may say were very dark. O! when that promise of the in-
 creasing of the Jewes shall once take place, what a wonder
 will they be to themselves that their understanding should
 have been under such a vail, when the truth shall be clear,
 and evident to them in that day? Will it not be a sweet,
 and easy work for the godly to sort together the predictions
 of the Word, and the events? And truly there is much
 now wrapt up in Scripture Prophecies, not yet fulfilled,
 which we may say, in after times when the event shall un-
 derstand their meaning, will exceed, yea, confound all these
 comments, many have had upon them.
 2. Is it not also clear, that these Prophecies which of
 the Scripture were most obscure, and overclouded with
 figures, and allegories, concerning which there had
 been such mistake, and hesitation by the Church, so ma-
 ny perplexing queries, have a peculiar respect to the last ti-
 mes? And that then they shall be made plain, and easy,
 when so notable a key as the event doth open them up; such
 these of the witnesses taking life, and rising again; Ba-
 bylons fall, and ruine, Christs Reigning with his Saints, a
 thou-

thousand Yeares, which now are in some measure already cleared, from their begun accomplishment, beyond former times, but we wait for a more full commentary, the time shall give upon the same.

4. It is in the latter times that the glory of God in his truth, and faithfulness, shall most eminently shine forth: that is a part of the solemn congratulation of the Church upon Babels fall, *Revelat. 18: ver. 3.* not only *great and marvelous are thy works*, but *just and true are thy wayes*, so truly in this stroke of the judgement of God, and these remarkable providences concurring therewith, the fulfilling of the Scripture will be so plain, and undeniable, that we may say, it will then dazel the eyes of men, even greater Atheists, alarme the World, yea very effectually contribute (we have ground so to judge) to that promised increase of the Church, and incoming of the Jewes, when in Antichrists fall, and ruine, they shall see so convincing a seal put to one of the most considerable Prophecies of the Word, in the accomplishment whereof much of the Prophetick part of the New Testament relating to the Churches state, and her long triall under Antichrists reign, may be seen clearly verified.

5. The Lord hath reserved his greatest Works to the latter dayes, wherein his judgments shall be manifest, and the Word confirmed by such solemn convincing providences, that men will not get them passed without a remark; we are this day witnesses to many such, & are looking what these times shall yet bring forth, that the great, and remarkable acts of the Lord, must force the World to see, a divine power, and say, lo there is an undoubted accomplishment of the Scripture

6. The Church in these last times, hath peculiar advantages, for understanding this truth of the Scriptures accomplishment, which former ages had not. First a great part thereof is now fulfilled that men may see with their eyes, if they but know how to lay the Word, and work of God together, the Christian Church had in former times, but dark glances at these great things, which we have this day

visibly

of the Scripture.

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visibly transcribed in providence; the promises were then travelling in birth of that which is now brought forth. 2. Are we not mounted as it were on the shoulders of that experience and observation of former times? which hath been transmitted to us, and we must say upon that account, the Church hath now a greater seal and confirmation of the truth, then what it had in the dayes of the Prophets, and the Apostles, even when Christ was in the flesh. 3. The Temple of God and Ark of his Testament is now opened in Heaven, light more fully abounding, and the meanes of knowledge; And, O! should not this be much our study, who have a greater talent then former ages! certainly this will be a sin of a deeper dye, then in times of ignorance, since we can be no strangers to this truth, without shutting our eyes, blinding the conscience, doing violence to our light, when the Lord doth give his People such solemn confirmations.

7. I shall add, is it not clearly foretold in that *Dan. 12: 4.* that in the last times this will be one of the special exercises of the saints to enquire, and make a diligent search concerning the Scriptures accomplishment? For its there said, many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased, importing that this shall be much their study, and cause a diligent search, whereunto the great works of God in these times shall invite them: and what should be the posture of the Godly in these dayes (on whom the end of the world is come) should it not be like the watchman in the last watch of the night, who looketh to oft what appearance there is from the east of the day breaking? a serious enquiry what of the Scripture is fulfilled, whereby we may know on very clear grounds, if the night be far spent, the day at hand, and that the coming of the Lord to judgement draweth near.

VIII. This is a great, and concerning duty: for Christians to study this truth, that they may have something more then report, how the Scripture hath a sure accomplishment, and doth take place in the providences of the time wherein we live.

live. I must think strange that there is such a great help in this, so near, and yet we see it not, nor do seriously ponder the same, when the command is so express to observe the works of the Lord, which for that end are shewed forth, that men may enquire, and read the faithfulness of God therein, yea, that so great a truth, which would bide the search of all the criticks of the World, a truth wherein our blessednes through time and eternity lieth, should offer itself to our triall, and yet, is so little known; O, who can dispense with the neglect of this duty? by which we answer that solemn call, and invitation of the works of God, do honour him, serve our generation, are helped to our own faith, and are thereby helped to strengthen others, yea are brought to see with our eyes, and from experience, what before was as a strange thing unto us.

Now to clear how much this is a Christians duty, to study a practical converse with the Word, and to be serious observers of its accomplishment, let us consider.

1. We are thus helped to declare the works of the Lord and to give him the glory of his faithfulness; and is not that a grave duty? Which at all times in every station, and condition of life, should engadge men to this study; thus, every Christian may become a witnes to the truth, and put his seal thereto, for which he should think his life truly desireable, and doth in no small measure, attain the true end thereof, though he had no other opportunity, for his masters service; we may say, this truth of the Scriptures accomplishment like a great roll, hath been transmitted from hand to hand, from one age to another, attested, and as it were subscribed by so many witnesses, it doth thus come to our time, and to every mans doore and require their personal witnessing and sealing of the same.

2. This should make it an easy work, to trust the Word and to adventure thereon in the ordinary occurrences of their life, they may well trust God in a strait, who have so strong an argument to make use of, that oft they have tried him, and the truth of his Word, by many, many experiences; will not these that know his name trust in him?

him? Which was a notable testimony from a serious Christian in a very sharp trial; oft have I tried God, and shall I not learn to trust him once?

3. This doth lay the Christian in the way of that promise. *Psal. 107. last. ver.* a promise truly large, and comprehensive, but little considered, that *such as are wise to observe the works of God, they shall see the loving kindness of the Lord*, even in their own particular case, made out to them, yea, whilst they are serious to observe his works abroad in the World, and his way to others they shall be no losers, thereby at home; but find this promise meet them and turn their generall observation, unto personal experience of the loving kindness of the Lord.

4. Thus the saints by experiencing the truth of the Word get a convincing seal thereby to their interest in the promise; for begun possession is indeed a strong witness to, this right when they can say, they have got as certain returns of the Word which they have put to an essay, in some particulars of their life, as they are sure of any thing they did ever see, so that from unquestionable experience they may set up a pillar, & write thereon *Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.*

5. Thus should Christians, with much advantage be helped to convince gainsayers; for its sure, Atheisme could not make so bold, and publick an appearance, if men did not so much take their religion on trust, O, the serious experienced man, can with an other confidence own the truth, whose experience, and observation of the works of God, give him an argument that none can answer, while not only he can assert, but conduct, and lead men to the things themselves, that they may see if in such and such particulars, the Scripture be not truly fulfilled.

6. Thus the providence of God, should have a more sweet refreshing countenance, when from this great height, that watchtower of Christian observation we take a look thereof, and truly otherwayes, men will stumble, at the most ordinary dispensations, and think Gods Work is a masse of confusion, but here we are taught to see, how the written Word, and his way, are linked in a most sweet agreement,

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7. We

7. We may thus trace Divine truth, even by our sense, and feeling, and joyn the Word, and experience in a regular correspondence; yea thus we should have a clear transcript of the Lords way with his Church taken out of that great authentick original of the Scripture; and there see on what a solid basis, and foundation that magnificent structure of providences raised up, what a notable key should we thus have for opening the Scripture, by a serious humble inquiry, after the works of God? Where not only the impression, and sign of the power, but of the truth, and faithfulness of the Lord are so very legible.

8. This is a piece of our talent, wherewith we are entrusted, of which every Christian should study a serious improvement, knowing they must render an account, what their observation of this great truth hath gained and what further establishment, and confirmation they have thus attained.

9. I would adde, the concernment, and weight of this study may presse it much on us; for if the Scriptures accomplishment be an undoubted truth, O! then this is sure the Saints have a great inheritance, they are Princes, though now under a disguise, and though yet minors they are heirs of more then the World can shadow forth; the Christian is then more happy on a dunghil, scraping his sore, then such who are cloathed in purple, and fare delicately every day; if this be sure, we should look with compassion rather then envy on these, whom the World doth account happy, we need not question the gain of Godlines, then it is sure, that such who sow in teares shall reap in joy, and the righteous though now trampled under, in the morning shall have dominion; yea, in a word, we may then on sure ground solace our selves with the thoughts of that great change, which will be within a little, when the grave must render back her prisoners, and may with as much assurance of a blessed resurrection ly down in the dust, as we are sure there will be a morning, when we ly down at night. O! then, there is a Heaven, and a hell, that is certain, eternity is not a night dream, and one moment shall

of the Scripture.

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shall shortly put an end to all our services, yea, the shutting of our eye lids at death, shall but open them in the Paradise of God.

HAVING touched this truth a litle in the general, I shall now, hold forth some arguments whence the accomplishment of the Scripture may be demonstrat; they are these five which I intend to prosecute in the following discourse.

FIRST Argument, To prove the Scripture is certainly fulfilled, and hath an accomplishment is this; That which hath been in all ages the testimony of the Saints, what every particular Christian doth seal; from their frequent, and sure experience, what is found, and proved by them, in their dayly walk, upon exactest trial, yea, what as many as ever were serious in religion do witness must be certain, and true.

But the accomplishment of the Scripture is such,
Therefore, &c.

II. Argument, That which is manifest; and legible in the whole course, and tenor of providence about the Church and by clear convincing instances; both of judgement, and mercy, is made out to the observation of every age, must be a certain truth, but the Scriptures accomplishment is such.

Therefore.

III. Argument, That which hath not onely the Christians testimony from experience, and of the Church from constant observation, but is obvious even to the view of the World, which from the conscience of the worst of men, doth force a testimony that they can neither shift, nor deny, which also may be demonstrat to the conviction of ordinary observers, & hath a publick acknowledgement from greatest Atheists, and mockers of religion in every

age, must surely be a clear truth.

But, &c.

Therefore.

IV. Argument. That which was to take place in such and such periods of time and hath accordingly come to passe, the event exactly answering to the prediction, yea, that whereof the great part is now fulfilled, and but a litle at this day remaineth to be made out, must be a certain truth.

But the great part of the Scripture is thus already fulfilled, and but a litle thereof now remaineth.

Therefore,

V. Argument. That which not only is for the most part already accomplished, but is a thing whereof we have such sure confirmations, yea, so great a pledge in our hand from the Lord, that what yet remaines shall be certainly fulfilled, must it not be an undoubted truth? But the Scripture as to these special predictions, that are not yet made out, is such concerning which the Lord hath given his People a very large pledge, and strong confirmations, now in these latter times, to believe their certain accomplishment. Therefore.

ARGUMENT FIRST.

THat the Scripture of God contained in the Old And new Testament, wherein our great hope, and comfort doth ly, is certainly true, [and hath a real accomplishment, may be thus demonstrat, *That it is tried, and Proved in the godly mans experience, to which in all ages, yea, from innumerable proofs the saints have put to their seal, that this is a sure, and faithful testimony.*

Experience is indeed a strong demonstration, and it is such a witnes as leaveth no room for debate, for here the truth is felt, proven, and acted on the heart, which the Christian knoweth well, and is as sure of as he is perswaded that he liveth or that the sun when it shineth hath light, and warmnes therewith, it is true the
World

World liveth at a great distance with this; they only converse with the sound of such a thing, and we know the naked theory of Scripture-truth hath but a short reach and that it differeth as far, from that which a serious practical Christian hath as the sight of a countrey in a map is from a real discovery of the same; where the difference is not in the degree, but in the kinde: yet though this grave testimony of experience is a thing where to many (alace, too many) are strangers, we must say so much thereof is obvious, as may force its authority on mens consciences, and shew there can be no fallacy, or delusion in this witness, if they but allow the use, and exercise of reason, seeing it is not the record of a few, at one time, or in one corner of the earth, but a solemn witness from the saints, and followers of God, whose judgement, and integrity, their adversaries must often confesse, yea, of all the saints in every age through the whole universal Church in parts of the earth most remote from other, and this, by most frequent renewed prooffs hath found, and experienced the truth, and real accomplishment of the Word: and now if this be not sufficiently convincing, I would but adde, O! *will you then come and see*, be but Christians indeed, and then ye will no more debate that testimony; and truly it is a very poore shift, for men who have the Scripture before them, which of it self doth witness its authority, and this backed with so solemn a seal from the Lord, by his works, and providence, to debate the Christians witness, from their experience, because they do not see this themselves, for what is the cause thereof is it not their choise? that they do not follow on to know the same, the truth of God seeketh credit from no man upon trust, yea, craveth no more but that by a practical converse they would put it to a trial, and then it shall not decline their judgement.

Now to prosecute this argument a litle, I shall point at some special Scripture-truths, with which Christians have most usual trade, and converse in their own case; and give in therewith, their testimony, how these are clearly proved and verified by most sure experience: it is not to

be here understood, the giving a particular account with respect to persons, time, or other circumstances, how the Word doth thus take place. I think it may be sufficiently convincing to instance in the general such clear uncontroverted experiences, which are well known to the godly, and have by them been oft proved amidst the various changes of their life (though not by all in the same measure but some suitable proportion to their different syzes, trialls, and wrestlings) which can witness that real correspondence which the Word hath with the experience of the saints; and truely concerning these I may with some confidence assert, they are not naked, or airy notions, but such as can witness their truth to the serious experienced Christian, whom on this account I dare attest.

I shall here instance. 5. Special truths of the Word, which are much tryed, and proved in Christians experience. 1. That there is such a contrariety betwixt the flesh, and the spirit, as the Scripture holdeth forth. 2. The deceitfulness of mans heart. 3. That there is a spiritual, and invisible adversary, with whom we have war. 4. That the promises of the Word have undoubted accomplishment. 5. The truth also of the threatnings, I mean such under whose reach the godly may fall.

I. That there is a contrariety betwixt the flesh, and the spirit, a Law in our members rebelling against the Law of our mind, is a truth very clearly proved to the Christian, whose experience though sad doth undenyably verify, and confirm the Scripture, Gal. 5: v. 17. Rom. 7: v. 19. 21. 23. this is a piece of the Word which holds forth mans nature in its true shape and form, whither their byasse, and inclination most easily turneth, yea, so marvellously answereth their experience, that to question the same were to put it far beyond question that they know nothing of a new nature or principle of grace within. For who ever made earnest of Religion but their first acquaintance with the peace of God, was the beginning of this war; it is then

then that the house divideth, and corruption setteth up a standard, yea, no sooner can any begin to be a Christian, but he must be a souldier also; and we may say none ever attained such a measure of mortification, or was so old in the grace of God, as could priviledge them from the stirrings of the old man; and necessity of that complaint, who shall deliver us from a body of death, but what ever advantage some of the saints have above others, yet in this their experience can witnes.

1. They now know two different parties within themselves that until once grace came they could not understand which at the same time in the very same action do act oppositly one to the other, yea, that there is no spiritual duty, wherein the flesh (though not alwayes in such a prevalent degree) doth not shew some active resistance.

2. That all the stirrings, and motions of the flesh have still a tendency, congruous to their own nature, to turn the heart carnal and to alienat it from God, so as it is easy to discern, how in these the rise and the end do thoroughly correspond.

3. That this is a cruel taskmaster if once it bear sway; imperious in its command, and violent in its pursuit, so that their experience may herein tell, its a sore, and an intolerable thing for a servant to bear rule.

4. That to things most forbidden, the flesh moveth most impetuously, so, as it will even break through the hedge, though sure thereby to be scratcht with thornes, yea, it is oft so eager in its pursuit, that it will follow the bait, while the hook is most discernable.

5. That when once this doth swell, and wax fat, they may upon another interest cry, *woe's us, our leanness*, for like the scales of the ballance, they find a proportionable abatement and depressing of their spiritual life, as the flesh goeth up, yea, they have cause to know how every step of their heart going forth to the World is a step that doth put them further off from God.

6. That the more closely the Law is prest in its spiritual extent, yea, the more spiritual a duty is, the more fully

opposit they find their carnal heart, and though the flesh may bear up a little with the forme of Religion, and hath more complacency with that way, which lieth most in externals, yet it cannot endure the power thereof, it can suffer men to be Hypocrites but not truely Christians.

7. To restrain, and bring this under bondage they find that it doth put the spirit so much at liberty, which getting loose reins for a litle will leave the soul work for many dayes, and with sad aftergroanes pay back an houres pleasure, yea, they also know, when the outward man is low, and upon a sensible decay, it hath not then hindered but rather effectually helped their inward joy, and strength.

8. That indulgence to the flesh causeth a sensible thick interposition between Heaven and the soul, whence they are so clogged, and hampered in their flight, and motion toward God, yea, thus have often their choicest duties been made a sore, and grievous task.

9. That this is the true rise of their usual perturbations, and doth still put some jar betwixt them, and their lot, and doth hinder a satisfied enjoying of that which they have, through murmuring at that they want, yea, they know, that to please the flesh hath been oft the cause of their greatest grief, and displeasure.

10. They also find how the defilement of their spirit, doth help to darken it, which overgrown with the flesh, can have no clear discovery of spiritual things, but the more separat from the body, and purged from these grosse dregs, they find themselves at a further advantage to converse with divine truths, which thus they get discovered, beyond all that nature can reach.

II. *That the heart of man is deceitful, and desperately evil, Jer. 17:9. Jer. 4:14. Prov. 4:23. Is a Scripture truth, where to the Christians experience doth answer, as the face answereth to its selfe in the glasse, yea we may say it is so clearly demonstrat to these who were ever serious, about their inward case, that while they thus read the*

of the Scripture?

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Word in themselves and are made to read themselves in the Word, they may with wonder acknowledge, that he, which can sound this great deep of the heart, and drawe so vive a portraicture thereof, is surely one before whom all things are manifest; who doth search, and try the reins, and know what is our mould, and fashion; this is one of the very first lessons which practical Religion doth teach, and the more neernes with God, and further measure of grace, that is attaind, the more clear discovery there will be of this; O! what sad houres, what bitter complaints, hath it caused? This oft doth marre the Christians feast, and mingle their Wine with Gall, and wormwood; I am sure if that excellent company of the Saints, who have been from the beginning to this day could be brought together, to give in their suffrage, and witnes concerning the deceitfulness of the heart there would be one joynt testimony to this truth; we should find that Enoch who walkt with God, Moses with whom he spake face to face, that beloved servant, who leaned in Christs bosome, and he who was caught up to the third Heavens were no strangers thereto, but could witnes thus.

1. That it is within which aileth them most, and their greatest adversaries are men of their own house, yea, that in the worst of times, there is still more cause to complain of an evill heart, then of an evil, and corrupt World, there being no worse company, then they are oft to themselves.

2. That no time of their life, but might give them, some further proof, that they are fooles who trust their own heart, which oft will escape and over-reach their quickest reflexion, even when both their eyes are on it; yea, that there is no time that alloweth the putting off their armour, or to dismisse their guard, not the best case, the greatest establishment in grace, nor the evening of the day, though they were within some minutes of the crown, and complete victory, doth priviledge them from the experience of a deceitful heart.

3. That under the best frame they find there will often lurk that which after-time doth discover that for the present

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sent though it had been told, they could not have believed, until frequent experience maketh them see that the Word knew their heart better then themselves.

4. That to bring home their heart when once it goeth abroad, or recall the liberty they have given it, is not easy, which doth no sooner parley with a temptation at a distance, adventure to sport therewith, but it quickly turneth to earnest, and is ready to yeeld.

5. They know the constant need to have a watch upon thier senses, and to make a Covenant with their eyes, which doe quickly betray thier heart; so easy it is to be deceived, yea, to grow warm, and to take need-fire upon the smallest touch.

6. How quickly also their spirit doth slacken, and lose its benfil even in the greatest advantage of their case, their experience can tell, that when in some measure they have been raised up in any spiritual enjoyment, they were then in hazard to be lift up to the wind, and to have their substance dissolved in the more solid part of Christianity.

7. What a sight have they sometime of themselves, such as would be a terrour to them, if the heart and motions thereof could be writ out to the view of others, or that any were witnesses to that which in one roome will dwell beside the grace of God as its door-neighbour.

8. In a word their experience doth witnes, how soon the strongest resolutions will evanish, that they are not as in the evening, what they were in the morning, nor for many houres do they keep the ground they had attained, but Reubens Character unstable as water, may be fit to their complaint, yea, I am sure as many as ever obtained mercy to know themselves, can tell that its past all reckoning, how oft their heart hath deceived them, when they trusted it most: This every day may cause them sit down, and admire the grace of God, which can mend, what they so oft marre, and is stronger to save, and preserve then they are to destroy.

III. That as there is a body of death within, they also

know

of the Scripture.

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know there is, *An adversary without*, Eph. 6: v. 12.
1 Pet. 5: ver. 8. Ioh. 8: v. 44. whose way, and devices,
and method of tempting doth most exactly answer
the discovery of the Word; this is indeed a truth, which
Christian experience in all ages doth witness, that no
sooner they had a serious look after God, but found them-
selves pursued by an invisible party whose, approaches
though spiritual, are yet certain, and most sensibly de-
monstrated, beside that which the Word doth clearly
teach, yea it is sure none of the saints were ever privileged
from such experiences, for herein doth the Christians war-
farely, but O how sweet may the evening be while they
sit down, and can sing that song, *Our soul hath escaped as
a bird from the fowler*. I shall here give in something of the
godly mans experience, which can bear witness to this.

1. That there is surely an other party then the World,
or themselves, with which they have to doe, an invisible
adversary without, whom they perceive by that sensible
correspondence he keepeth with their heart within, by
these violent inroads, importunate sollicitations, these impe-
tuous motions, wherewith they are so strangely hurried,
and oft driven over light, and judgement, yea, over their
strongest resolutions, so as he may be as discernable to
them, and that there is something therein beside them-
selves, as if they conversed with him in an outward visible
shape.
2. That since the time when they begun to look after
God, and to know any thing of his work upon their
spirits they have been acquainted with most affrighting,
dreadful temptations, and do now perceive his rage,
and violent pursuit to bring them back, which they knew
not before, when at peace with their idols, and sinfull way.
3. That the mark he levelleth at, to which his usual
temptations have a tendency, is their soul, and inward
man, to hinder communion with God, and to turn their
heart off from him, to break the Law, and lay aside com-
manded duties.
4. That his ordinary approaches to the heart are oft by a

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very small thing, he needs no more but an open door, a sinful look for the dispatch of a temptation, and knoweth by a wound in the eye, how to carry death in, to the soul.

5. That he is such a party as knoweth his time and opportunity, can change his weapons, and busk the hood with divers baits, and yet he is alwayes at hand, when the heart is lifted up, when they are out of their duty, and well in a carnal frame, to put in then with some temptation, and fish in such a drumly water.

6. That his way doth truly answer his name, *Spiritual wickednesse in high places*, this being so discerned, by daily experience that he hath the advantage of the ground, is most subtile observing adversary, who lieth in the dark, to us, while we are in the light to him, and knoweth how to correspond with our corruption, and to suit his temptation to our natural temper (wherewith he is well acquainted) and to our calling, and our company, to the present straits to our predominant inclination and to our retirement, and to solitude, yea that he is one who knoweth how to follow in, and ply with such a gale, when we are in hot blood, in any distemper, and discomposure of spirit.

7. That he can transform himself into an Angel of light, and sute his temptations to the spiritual exercises, and enjoyments of the saints; that there are temptations on the right hand as well as the left, which are so refined, and like a Christian exercise that they can scarcely discern the weed from the flower, and most dreadful errors from the choicest truths, to which they oft have a great resemblance though at last it doth appear that the native tendency even of the most specious errors in the judgement is to looseness in practice, and to make men religiously irreligious.

8. That he is also a roaring lion, which they have proved by the dreadfull blasphemous injections, these fiery darts which are thrown in with violence, wherewith there is no concurrence of the inclination, or consent, but a discernable force put upon them, assaulting them with most horri-

of the Scripture.

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en door, horrid Atheistick thoughts, even while their heart doth
and knowe with abhorrence, and enter their dissent against the
in, to the

9. That he is a most restless adversary who is going still
out and giveth no cessation, but with purpose to return
some greater advantage; and is no lesse terrible in his
and, whilst then in his assault, and that he can speak out of a friend
r duety, as well as out of a foe, yea, and doth then most dange-
r temptation, and doubly tempt, when the temptation is least seen, or dis-
covered.

10. That his temptations doe not only drive at engag-
ing of the heart to bring sin to the thought, but also the
bringing it forth to the act, for putting some blot upon their
in the dark walk, and conversation.

11. That he is one who is overcome by resistance, and
temptation, both flee before these that withstand him, which they have
acquainted, it proved, that they have returned from prayer with the
resent strength of their adversary, and at such a time have been made
ment, and wonder, how that which hath oft foyled them, should
w to follow have been their temptation.

12. They also find by frequent observation that though
he is most subtil, being indeed one who through long ex-
perience, and continued practice hath attained a great deal
of dexterity in tempting; yet, that he hath one usual me-
thod, and such devices which the serious Christian, by
daily experience, & watchfulness, may easily discern, and
perceive his temptations in their rise, and at a distance while
they are as it were, creeping up the wall; yea thus in
some measure he may find out the depths of Satan, and
know how to avoid the net spread by that great fowler.

IV. That the promises of the Word which are held forth to the
Godly for their use, and encouragement while they are in
the way, have a certain accomplishment, and are a safe ground
to adventure upon, and worthy to be credited, is a
truth tried in all ages whereto experience of the saints can
give a large testimony.

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The fulfilling

Now in speaking to this grave subject, it is not neede to speak any thing of the nature, and diverse kinds of promises, nor whence it is that we live at so poor a rate, as *sin* uncomfortably while such a well as this, is at our hand for its easy to read the cause within our selves, we slow sparingly, and venture little out, therefore we have so small an increase; there is a price for wildome, but it is in the hands of fools who have no heart thereto, but this doth not concern us here, for I only aime to hold out this, that the promises which God hath given his People in the Scripture, are of unquestionable verity, and have as really, a sure performance in the saints experience, as they are of that which cometh most necessarily to passe, by the concurrence of natural causes as that the fire doth burn, when combustible matter is added, or the sun after its going down; for indeed this truth is so manifestly proved by such innumerable experiments, amidst the various changes of a Christians condition, that we might reckon it as many witnesses as have been followers of God in the World, which are not a few, who in all ages have put the promises to an essay, and put their seal thereto. God is true; yea, to ask at such, if they know whether there be a truth in Scripture promises, that cometh not to passe, I think were to enquire at a living man, whether he seeth, and feeleth, or if there be such a thing as motion, since they have as sure, and sensible a demonstration of one, as he hath of the other.

But ere I speak any thing particularly to this, I will first premit some things to clear whar we understand by the saints experience of the truth of the promises, these following considerations.

1. We would consider, though the Scripture hath been its accomplishment, and is intended for the use of the Church, and every particular Christian, while on the earth in his militant condition, yet there are some promises in the Word yea, the greatest, which belong to the saints that will not be fulfilled, until they have cast off their pilgrimage, and are called to divide the spoyl, their exultation

of the Scripture.

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ience of which, will be the high prize of the calling of God in Christ, whereof all which they enjoy is but an earnest.

2. We would consider that the great intent of the Scripture, and promises thereof is not for contemplation, but that we may know them by experience, and drive a blessed trade, and commerce therewith; the merchandize of which is better nor that of gold, for here lyeth the Christians life in the World, yea, it is a great part of their talent, the promises, which are not to be laid up in their heart, and memory, as in a napkin, but they must give an account what experience they have gained thereby, and thus the diligent hand should make rich.

3. What ever be the different syzes, and degrees of experience among the saints, according to their growth, and age in Christ; yet it is certain that the meanest who have interest in the promises, and did ever grip them in earnest and put them to trial must know something of the performance of the same in their own case; for the Lord doth not suffer his work in his People to want a seal.

4. The godlies experience hereof, is then much made out, when they are much in observation, and we know little of the truth, and performance of the promises, because we are not more habitually in a frame to observe; thus he goeth by, and we perceive not; but they never wanted confirmations, who were seriously seeking to be confirmed in the truth of the Word.

5. The special mercies, and providences of a Christian life, are a certain return of the promise, & in that way do meet them; as the proper channel of their conveyance; for they are the sure mercies of the Covenant, and how refreshing is it, that all the severall cases of the Saints, and their outgate thereof, their meanest as well as their greatest necessities, are comprehended in the Word, and under some promise, and were all foreseen in his everlasting view, who hath so marvellously suited the same to all that his People stand in need of, as if it had been directed to such, and such a Christian onl.

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6. This helpeth to make the mercies of the godly man to have a peculiar, & sweet relish, & to be some way twice his mercy, when he gets them in so immediate a way reached to him as it were out of the promise, and as an observable return from Heaven, when thus the Lord sealeth his Word to him by his work, and the way of the Word he findeth hath been the way of his comfortable outgate; that when he hath had no other escape, but to turn in to the promise, and to cast himself upon it, he gained this experience; he trusted in God, and was helped, and can give in this testimony of him, that he hath both spoken it, and himself also hath done it, according to his Word.

7. It is not any extraordinary thing, we here understand, by the Christian mans experience of the truth of the promises, it is not a rapture or revelation, or such as some of the Saints have upon some singular, and special account had; for we have not any promise for these things, but it is something, well grounded upon the Word, which constantly holdeth in the Lords ordinary way of procedure with his People, according to the tenor of the Covenant, for his Word doth good to them that walk uprightly, and doth certainly take place in the experience of every serious, and diligent Christian.

8. This is not the testimony of a few, but the record of all the Saints since the beginning, whose experience doth all most harmoniously agree, and bear one witnes that he is faithful who hath promised, & it is not that which a Christian hath found once, or twice in his life; but the dayly food of such as live by faith.

9. This doth put a strong obligation on the godly man to the Word, for the time to come, for these who have tried it often, may with much confidence trust it, in the day of their strait.

10. The experience which the godly hath of the real performance of the promises is a most convincing evidence of his state in Christ, it is the earnest, and pledge of the inheritance, and full accomplishment of that which remaineth, that the Lord will make perfect what concerneth him, who hath

hath been his help hitherto, and will be his exceeding great reward in the end, who hath made him find so much of the gain of godlines, here by the way.

Now having premitted these things, I shall here instance some particular promises, wherein the Christians most usual trade, and commerce doth ly, and to which they give in their seal and witnes; I confesse if all these proofs which the Saints have had, of the fulfilling of the promises could be gathered together, we might make use of that Divine hyperbole, *The World could not containe the bookes that should be written thereof.* O, what an admirable volume, what an excellent commentary, and copy should this be of the Scripture, to see it thus turned over into the experience of every Christian; it would be some way as easy to number the drops of rain, and dew since the creation, as to reckon, all these pretious drops, and emanations of love, these sensible returns, and outmakings of the promise, which they have had in their experience; I truly think it could hardly be believed, though it were told, what some of the godly, here, have found in the way of the Word; but it is sufficient, to answer the design of this work, to shew that there is a sensible demonstration, and performance of Scripture promises, concerning which the experience of the Saints in all ages doth agree; that by many confirmations the Lord hath oft sealed the truth thereof to their souls.

There are 10. special promises, held forth to the godly in the Word, which I shall here instance, and therewith hold forth, what a clear testimony their experience can give, of the undoubted truth, and accomplishment of the same.

FIRST. Instance, in that promise given to believing, to such who credit the naked word, when there is no probable appearance of its outmaking, and thus give God the glory of his faithfulness, which we have expressly held out. *1 Chrom. 20:20. Ps. 112:7,8. Joh. 1:50.*

To clear the accomplishment of this promise, I shall but appeal to that testimony the saints in all ages have left thereof, yea to the present experience of the godly at this day, if they have not certainly found it so.

1. That when in a particular they have trusted God there, with and got their spirit quiet, in a recumbency on him, he hath dealt with them according to his word, yea if then from cleer convincing returns of the promise they have not been made to say, it did never repent them, that they gave more credit to the testimony of God, then of their own hearts.

2. That they have not found a more sweet, and observable issue, then, when their help lay most immediatly on the word alone; never a more sensible outgate then when least of sense, and most of faith was in carrying them through, when little of the creature, and much of God appeared in their mercy, and where they were at the lowest, no way of escape but to throw themselves on the promise; they have then had the best retreat, yea, their supply as sensibly felt, as their need, and burden had formerly been.

3. That their greatest difficulties, and shakings anent the promise have helped to their further confirming, and establishment, so as they can say, the Lords way, by brangling them first, yea, to their sense loosing their grip, hath helped to fasten it better, and that which for the time did speak their case most helpelesse, hath made way for his more eminent appearance, and manifesting of himselfe.

4. That their greatest venture, and giving most out hath usually had the richest income, the most eminent experiences of their life, have followed the most adventurous acts of their faith, yea, upon an after reckoning they have oft found, that their adventuring of life, estate, and credit on the promise of God, even in these things, hath very observably been their upmaking.

5. That where they have most been a friend to their faith, there hath faith also been most a friend to them, in their standing to the credit of the promise, over the belly
of

of greatest objections, and false reports raised thereof, they have found a very evident mark of Gods respect to the same, causing them to see, that he will honour such who thus honour him. And it is indeed worthy of a remark, whar we have of Caleb upon record, that he took part with the promise of God against that discouraging report which then was raised of the Anakims, and their walled cities; and therefore the inheritance of the Children of Anak was given to Caleb, and his sonnes, in their lot, from the Lord.

6. That believing doth alwayes make way for sense, and in their closing with the naked Word of promise, they have not wanted the seal of the Spirit of promise, but have found a sweet calm, their burden sensibly eased, when once they got it laid over on the word, which they can say hath been their first resting place, like the very fixing of the motion of the needle towards its right point, when their spirit had been restless, and in greatest agitation.

7. That these greatest disappointments, which their hope in the Word seemed to have, they have found afterwards most to their advantage, when their returns have not only been according to their faith, but have often exceeded their adventure, and been far beyond what they believed, yea, that from frequent experience they may say, the issue of trusting the Word, how long so ever they thought it deferred, yet, came alwayes in season, was never too late and out of time.

8. That this did never occasion bitter reflexions, or was their upcast before the World, that they trusted God in a day of strait and were not helped; but this testimony have all such left, who have most credited it in a dismal houre, that none should scarr after them to hazard upon such a hand, and venture on the promise, for, their faith hath oft taken them well, and comfortably through, where both sense, and reason have been ready to sink.

SECOND Instance, Whereby we may see the performance of the promise in Christian experience is this, That

God truly heareth prayer, is near unto his People in what they call upon him, agreeable to his Word, and will answer their desires, we have this promise most expresse, *Phil. 4:v. 6. Psal. 32:v. 16. Psal. 65:2. Psal. 91:15.*

Now the accomplishing of this piece of Scripture is so very clear, that I can attest the experience of all the generation of the righteous, since the beginning, what frequent and unanswerable confirmations they have got of this truth in their Christian walk, so that I am sure, no man ever was in earnest in the matter of Religion, and a stranger to this; yea, that he was never more certainly perswaded of any thing, then of this that God doth hear prayer. O if mens souls were but in their souls stead whose evening wrestlings, and teares, the Lord hath oft turned into a morning song, they should know this is no delusion. I shall here touch something of that experience which by many proofs the saints can give as a witness to this promise.

1. That when they have oft with *Hanna* gone in before the Lord in the bitterness of their spirit, they have been made to return with a sensible, and marvellous change in their case; yea, when in going about prayer, they have been put to wrestle with much distemper, and deadnes, they have oft seen the wind discernably change, and therewith their spirits lightned from under that burden, an observable calme, and serenity after much inward perturbation, yea they can say that they have found their hearts thawed, and put in a flush of tendernes, upon the back of a most sensible restraint.

2. That access, and liberty to poure forth their souls to God when he hath filled their mouth with arguments, and inabled them both to wrestle, & wait, they have found a favourable *Crisis* and begun outgate, yea, the very turn of a sad case, which they have got from the Lord, as the pledge of a further answer, and that when he thus prepareth the heart, he doth cause his ear to hear.

3. That when they have been under a most dark cloud, they have found their sky clear, have got a very sensible taste

taste of Gods acceptance in prayer and of his taking their
sute off their hand, even while the matter was still in de-
pendance before him, yea that they have oft had such a fa-
tisfying impreffion of Gods minde, and perswasion of his
answering their desire, as hath helped them cheerfully
to wait, yea sometimes to sing the triumph before the
victory.

4. That when they had been much in prayer, they must
also say, it hath been the time wherein the spirit hath flow-
rished, was most lively, yea then they had their best dayes,
then, the candle of the Lord shined upon their pathes, and
his dew lay all night upon their branches, and they have
found there is an evident, and proportionable abatement of
their spiritual life, and encouragement in God, according
to their wearing out in the exercise of this duty.

5. They have many times found, that when there was
nothing left them, but to return in to God, & they knew
of no other way to come through but to pray, and look up,
they never found a more sweet, and seasonable outgate,
so that most observable times of prayer, have been also the
most observable times of their experience, and they can
say from many proofs, it is no hopelesse buslines, which
is put over upon God by prayer, though there be small out-
ward appearance.

6. That it is not in vain to follow out a sute before the
throne, but accessse and moyen in Heaven is as sure a way to
come speed (which they know well) as greatest moyen upon
earth; having so evidently found, while many seek the ru-
lers favour, that the determination of every thing is from
the Lord.

7. That prayer with quiet onwaiting in the use of meanes
winneeth comfortably through, where overcaring, and
carnal policy, in the use of all other shifts hath been forced
to stick.

8. They know by experience, that as there are judicial
times, wherein an inhibition as it were is laid on them from
the Lord, in their wrestling, yea and a sore restraint on
their spirits, which hath been very sensible, so also they
have

have found times of prayer let forth, before some special mercy, and deliverance to the Church, whereby they could in some measure discern its neer approach.

9. That on the back of some solemn addresse, and application to God by prayer, and fasting in a day of strait, they have oft seen cause even from that day, and upward to date a remarkable return, and outgate, in which even common observers might discern what an evident answer the Churches intercession with God in times of extremity hath had.

10. I may adde, the saints know this so well by experience that surely God heareth prayer, even in such, and such a particular, that they can with much confidence adventure, and make an earand of the meanest, as well as their greatest concernments to him, having so oft tried, and found that seriousness, and sincerity in addresse to God was never in vain, but what ever be the times, therein his promise taketh place, their heart shall live that seek God.

THIRD Instance Is the promise of the Spirit, and pouring out of the same, which we have clear in the Word, Is. 59. v. 21. Joh. 14:16, Luk, 24: v. 49. Rom. 8:16, 16.

The accomplishment of which is so manifest, such a sensible demonstration thereof, in the experience of the saints that I am sure this can no more be denied, then these who are warmed with the heat of the sun can deny their sense, and feeling, that the sun hath such an influence: and doth not the Christians spiritual walk, bear as convincing a witness to the fulfilling of this promise, as any living man, by walking in the way sheweth that he hath a soul, and principle of life within him. Now to demonstrat this a little I would but touch some of the ordinary experiences of the saints therein, which they doe testify and by clear undeniable evidences know to be no delusion.

1. That which causeth so real a change upon them, which maketh them alive to God, who once were dead, creating them as it were of new, that which bringeth a clod of

of earth so near Heaven, raiseth so far above themselves to a delightful converse with things not seen, that while their place, and abode is here, their company, and fellowship is above; that which maketh all things new to them and doth so far change their nature. and inclination as causeth them finde more sweetnes in a spiritual life then in the pleasures of sin, yea, reconcileth them with the Law, and exercises of a Christian, where once there was such contrariety, O! is not this a real effect of the Spirit, and no imaginary thing;

2. That whereof they were altogether ignorant, when they were strangers to God, and knew not if there was a Holy Ghost, but by report, now, since their being born again they finde themselves entred in another World, brought out of darknes unto a marvellous light, and of this are sure, that once they were blinde, but now they see, is not this a proof of the truth of this promise?

3. That which maketh them see more of God in his Word, and Works, at one time then at another; whence is this difference, and enequality, the Scriptures are at one time the great thingh of the Law, which are at an other time, but common thingh to them; the object is the same, but O! what different manifestation thereof? whence is it that such a light springeth up in the Word, that openeth up this deep, and maketh them see the wonders of his Law, and within a little nothing but dark night, doe not the saints know this well, and that it is no delusion?

4. That which maketh such sensible liberty in their soul, and confidence in their approach to God, after soie bondage, and fear, which raiseth them often so far above their ordinary frame as they are not only quikned, and refreshed themselves, but do observably warm others, O how piercing, and savory are their words, which shew what difference there is oft, betwixt a Christian, and himself; betwixt a dead exercise of a gift which reacheth the ear, and that which melteth the heart, and doth even reach by standers, with a pleasant perfume.

5. That which maketh such a sudden change in their case

under ordinances, that their heart that died within them as a stone, ere ever they were aware hath taken life, and needfire with a Word, yea, hath been powred out within them so as their beloveds voice hath had an other sound; O then they think not the time long, the Word is as the honey from the comb, so as they have oft wisht a perpetual arrest upon their spirit in such a condition, that none may stirr up their beloved until he please; can that be any delusion?

6. That which bringeth in promises seasonably into their minde in the day of their strait, and causeth the Word tryst so suitably to their present case with such a satisfying impression of the same, as doth give most sensible, and present ease.

7. That which so clearly by the Word discovereth to men their own heart, and doth search them out in their most close and retired thoughts, that they have been oft made to wonder, how the Word is upon all their secrets; is not this the candle of the Lord?

8. That which doth demonstrat their state and being in Christ, by an argument which is beyond all words, and doth by power in an irresistible way answer all objections, and turn the most froward case into a blessed calme, and hath made a simple word more effectual in a moment, then most perswasive arguments could be.

9. That which maketh such abundant joy spring up in the heart, when there is no visible grounds for the same, like the dry bone gushing out water, must surely be some supernatural, and excellent power, that can not only bring it out of nothing, but out of contraries.

10. That which giveth them so sensible a taste of the powers of the World to come, such a ravishing glance of the inheritance, that they could hardly sometime forbear to rise at midnight and sing for joy in the hope thereof, and hath given them such a discovery of God at some special times, as hath made them judge that all they ever knew of him before, was but by the hearing of the ear.

11. That which is so discernable, and sensibly felt in the

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present time, that Christs return to the soul, and the out-
letting of the spirit, hath been as evident oft to the saints,
as to that Martyr who was forced to cry out at the stake,
He is come, he is come; and hath been so sweet when enjoy-
ed, that the remembrance of some of these times hath
been very pleasant, and refreshing, yea this is such a thing
as most observably tryts the godly man in the way of his
duety, according to the Word.

12. That is no delusion, the withdrawing whereof is so
sensible to them, as it maketh their duety wherein they have
had delight, become their burden, when they are put
to row with oares, the wind being gone, and maketh it
like night to the soul, when the sun is gone down, & sad
experience hath oft shewed them, how the overclouding
of their soul, the withdrawing of the spirit, and comfort-
er, doth observably follow a sitting up of their duety, and
yeilding to any known sin, by which it is grieved.

FOURTH Instance, is that Promise for direction which
God hath given his People in the Word, that he will guide
them with his Counsel, will order, and direct their steps,
who doe commit their way to him, and teach them the
way that they shall choose, *Pf. 37:5. Pf. 25:9, 14. Pf. 73:*
ver. 24.

The fulfilling of which hath been so manifest to these
who ever made earnest of acknowledging God in their
wayes, and committing the conduct thereof to him, that I
shall but attest their experience, if they have not this testi-
mony to give.

1. That to trust God with their case, and give him the
guiding of their way, hath taken them much more easily
through a plunging case, then overcareing anxiety, yea,
the Lords directing their steps, and making things suc-
cessful, when they have committed the same to him, hath
been often asensible to them, as their strait, and difficul-
ty was.

2. That the way of the word hath been the best expe-
dient

dient for taking them safe, and comfortably through, and that they never repented that they did more consult their duty, then inclination, when they were at a stand about a particular, and did not debate the command, even while there seemed a lion in the way.

3. That they were never left without counsel, and direction, when their eye was single, and serious about it, and it was not so much want of light as of an heart to close themselves, that made their way oft so dark, but when they subjected themselves to Gods minde, they found, that such who follow him, shall not walk in darknes.

4. That light, and counsel doth tryst men in following the command, and the practice of known duety, hath helped them to know more their duety, and that light did most abound when it was their serious study to follow the same.

5. They found it was never in vain to enquire after Gods mind by prayer, and also in the temple to make a reference of a particular to him, when it was too hard for them, but have often seen the Word evidently directed to such, and such a case, as if they had gotten a return from Heaven by an audible voice.

6. They also know, that Gods following in light, with a powerful impression, his teaching the reines, and instructing with a strong hand is no delusion, but the sure, and well grounded experience of most solid Christians in all ages, yea, most discernable from any false impulse, and that some special piece of work and service, which God hath layed in their way, wants not usually some special call, backed with such light, and authority, as in an irresistible way, can answer all objections, to make them go bound in the spirit, about such a duety.

7. How Gods special directing hand, hath been oft very observable, not only in preventing, and crossing their way. to withdraw them by some sharp dispensation, from their purpose, but sensibly overpowering them, so that they have been plucked as it were back, from unavoidable hazard, that they could not finde their pathes.

8. I shall adde, they have oft observably found, how

easy

easy their way was made to them when the Lord doth countenance, and prosper the same; what sweet concurrence of providences, how then difficulties have most sensibly been taken out of the way, yea, winde, and tyde going along with them, in such a manner, that they have been forced to see, and confesse a divine hand therein.

FIFTH Instance, is the promise of Pardon, and forgiveness which God hath given his People in the Word, that for his names sake he will blot out their iniquity, and remember their sin no more, yea, is ready to pardon, which is expressly held forth, to these who are truly humbled, Mic. 7:18. Jer. 31:34. Is. 43:25.

Now that there is a real accomplishment of this, I am sure the experience of the saints can in all ages clearly witness, what joy and peace this hath occasioned, what a sensible demonstration, and solemn confirmations they have had of this promise, so as their very bones might sing; *Who is like unto thee, O Lord?* It is true real pardon of sin doth not alwayes inferre the sensible feeling thereof, and when it is remitted in Heaven, there is not alwayes a declaration of it in the conscience, but it is also sure, that this is sensibly felt, and that it is tryed by all even all the generation of the righteous to have had as powerful an operation on a disquiet, troubled soul, as ever wine, or the choicest cordial could have on the sick, or faint; O! if these who question this, were in their case, to whom God speaketh peace after a storm, they should know how real, and certain that is: I would offer the Christians witness to this promise, from many, many experiments, by which the Lord hath sealed it to their soul, whereby they know assuredly it is no fancy, or delusion.

1. How this hath as sensible a connexion with the serious exercise of contrition, and repentance in their experience, as it certainly hath in the word, and promise; while they find, that in silence, and keeping up their case from God, their bones have been troubled, their spirit

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in a restless, and disquiet condition, untill once they made an addresse, and got their soul vented by confessing to the Lord which was then like a kindly turn, and cool of fever.

2. They know it is no delusion that is found so certain a cure to a wounded spirit, under the sense of sin, a wound which the world & all its diversions could never heal, whose pain, & grief no musick can allay (a drop of divine pleasure being enough to turn all their pleasures in worm-wood, and gall) but, O! a taste of this unspeakable cordial, one warming look of a reconciled God, they know by experience, can give present ease.

3. It is no delusion which they can command no more, then the sun to shine when overclouded, or the wind to blow, but when it listeth, which the most perswading moral arguments. can no wayes effectuat nor all their former experience, yea, the letter of most refreshing promises, which sometimes are to them, but as the white of an egge, without taste, untill once the spirit breath, which not only discovereth the ground of their joy in the word, but doth also cause them to rejoyce therein, when it shineth upon the same.

4. It must be no delusion which causeth so marvellous a change that after greatest disquieting fears, they have found most sensible manifestations of love, the greatest flood on the back of the lowest ebb in their spiritual condition, which oft hath forced them to retreat, what their feares, and jealousies did utter; yea, hath made them enquire with wonder, whence they are so chearful to day, who yesterday were so broken, and crushed: whence their spirit, should be in so sweet a calm, that so lately was like the raging, and troubled sea.

5. That this hath oft met them, as a blest surprizal, and unexpected welcom; when they have in a backsliding case come in to God, they certainly know, that when they knew not how to adventure, and at what end of their raveled condition to begin, counts having run long over, yet on their very first addresse, have got a sweet disappointment

they made ment to their feares, been helped to their feet; yea, some
confessing times have had as it were the fatted calfe killed to make
and cool of merry with their friends.

6. That which hath an audible voice within, so strong
so certain an impression upon the soul, which carrieth with it such a
a wound clear satisfying discovery of Gods heart, and love, is
neal, whose surely no delusion, while the intimation of that one truth,
divine dis Your sins are forgiven. or any other word of promise for
in worme that end, they have found to be an argument beyond words,
mable con which they could not resist, but for the time, have been
they know as sure, they see, and feel this, as that they live, yea, can no
more now call it in question, then formerly they could get
no more, it believed.

7. That is no delusion which causeth them with another
e wind to kinde of freedome, approach to God, maketh them
erfwading know there is a Spirit of adoption which sets the soul at
d their for liberty, from the sore bondage, and thraldome under
ng promi which their former backsliding had put them, yea, a thing
white of an not only sensibly felt by themselves, but may be discerned
h, which by others, while they cannot smother the joy of their
he word, heart or hide in their countenance such a change of their
it shineth condition, that truely God hath dealt comfortably with
them.

8. Hath not this the Saints in all ages witnessed even a
they have joy unspeakable, and full of glory which though but of
teft flood short continuance yet for the present so strong, as hath ra-
condition, vished their soul with the hope of the inheritance above,
their feares, and clear view of their interest in it, yea, sometimes, made
quire with them sing for joy, in expectation of that blessed day,
no yester but, O! this is better felt then expressed.

9. And in a word can that be a delusion that hath oft turn-
e raging, ed the poor mans hell into a Heaven, which tryts the
Christians in the way of his duty, and the work doth so
exactly answer the promise, most sensibly felt after greatest
shakings of the conscience by the law, and can make
a sad outward lot, so very sweet, and pleasant, cause
them triumph over the wrath of men, to sing in a dun-
geon, to abound and have all things under greatest wants,
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look grim death chearfully in the face in its most dreadful aspect, yea, doth make so great, and visible a difference betwixt the Christian, and himself.

SIXTH Instance, Is that promise of encouragement, and support under the crosse, which is expressly held forth in the Word, that the Lord will own his People, bear their charges, and be with them in trouble in the day of their suffering for his truth; yea, will bind up the broken in heart, and heal their wounds. Psal. 91:ver. 15. Isai. 43:ver. 2. Cap. 41:ver. 17. & Cap. 49:ver. 14. Psal 9:ver. 9. Isai. 51:ver. 12.

Now that this promise is a truth, and hath a certain accomplishment, the experience of the Saints in all ages will witness, and we know their testimony is true, what at solemn times of Gods presence they have had in a barren wilderness, how great a cloud of witnesses doth seal this, and give their testimony to the crosse of Christ, of which we may say, the same, and sweet favour hath gone forth, and spread abroad through the Church, the Fathers have told it to the Children, and one generation to another, but how little a part thereof can be expressed! I think it would be a marvellous record, if the suffering, and prison experiments of the Saints were particularly set down, what they have found under the crosse, but it is well, we know this promise hath been, and this day is evidently sealed, concerning which I dare attest the experience of as many as did ever drink of this blessed cup, and were counted worthy to suffer for the testimony of Christ, if this be not a faithful, and true witness.

First that they have oft tested what communion with God is, in the secret duties of a Christian, also in the publick ordinances, and in a special measure, at some more solemn times, but, O! never knew his presence and communion with him more sensibly then under the crosse, yea, have found that the work, and service of a suffering time, as it is not the ordinary service of every day,

hath

hath also a peculiar, and more then ordinary allowance.

2. That they never knew divine strength more sensibly, then when they have been most pressed above their own strength, that in the day they were cast on Gods immediate care, and ordinary meanes, of their help most withdrawn, they had never lesse cause to complain, but might often say this as their experience, they thirsted not when he led them through the wilderness, yea, that they have no time of their life, found their mercies more observably tryst them, more sweet, and satisfying, then when by prayer, and beleiving, they were put to digg the well, and wait for the rain coming down to fill it.

3. That they never found more true liberty, then in the house of bondage, more refreshing company, then amidst their greatest solitude, while they found him near, whom gates, and barres cannot shut out, in the day when all things else seemed to frown upon them, that their midnight songs have been sweeter, then all the prosperity they sometimes enjoyed, and that they have oft proved, that the deeper any are in affliction for Christ, and his truth, they are also the deeper in consolation.

4. They must say the most satisfying, and clear discoveries of the word are under searching, and sharpest trials, that a sanctified exercising affliction, they have found one of the best interpreters of the bible, and the word then to be an other thing, then it is at other times, yea, even to have been that to them, which they could desire it to be, so as they are sure it hath been shaped out, and directed for that present plunge their soul was in.

5. That there is a very easy passage and dispatch, betwixt Heaven, and an oppressed afflicted soul, an observable vent by prayer, and more sensible access to Gods face, when other things have most frowned, yea, they can witness from experience, he stayeth his rough wind in the day of his East wind. While he shutteth one doore he hath set an other open, that when the storm without hath been very sharp, they have found a sweet calm, and sun-shine within to make it easy, and when he layeth on one sore trial, he will take an other off.

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6. They can tell what a sweet comfortable parting, they have oft had, with some sharp trial, which at the first was bitter as death, but in the close, after sanctified exercise under the same, they have found cause to leave in their blessing; and confesse that the time of greatest jealousy and fear upon their part, they have found on Gods part, hath been a time of greatest kindnes, and love, the sharpest wounds from such an hand, and heart as his, hath tended to a cure, yea, that circumstance, and ingredient in the same which of all was most bitter, and grievous, even there they have found their outgate and encouragement most remarkable.

7. That the peculiar advantage of a sanctified trial, is not so well seen in the present time, as afterwards, when the case hath altered, then they found a long, and rough storm recompenced at their landing, with a rich loadning of experience, an other kind of discovery of God, his way, and the certainty of his word then they formerly had won to; so as now they can speak of him, and the good of the crosse, and adventuring any thing for Christ, with some greater esteem, on an other ground, then report, or an hearing thereof by the ear.

8. I shall adde what hath been the frequent testimony of these who ever endured tribulation for the gospel, that their remembrance, and after reckoning, upon this account hath not been sad, or bitter, when they sat down, and compared their gain with their losse, their upmaking with these dayes of trial, that have gone over their head, that they would not then exchange their experience, or want what they have found by the crosse, no not for many moe dayes of trouble, and affliction.

SEVENTH Instance, is that promise of the word which integrity, in an evil time hath, that it shall preserve their steps, and be the best mean to help these through that keep Gods way, yea, even in this life shall not want some witness of Gods respect. Ps. 18:25. Ps. 112:4. Rev. 3:10.

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Now to hold forth the accomplishment of this, I may with confidence appeal to the observation of the saints in all ages; who ever made it their serious study to keep their garments clean in a time of tryal, if their experience, hath not this testimony to give.

First that though at present; honesty in evil times hath brought them in hazard, and with Joseph to a prison, yet; it hath brought them out also, with observable advantage, yea, how ever the Lord did order their outgate, they have found this did land them well, and alwayes bring them to a comfortable harboury.

2. That honesty, and faithfulness hath an authority even on the conscience of their enemies, and leaveth usually a conviction upon them: Yea, hath forced a testimony, and approbation, from such men, and they have oft found better entertainment, then these who in a sinful way have sought to please them.

3. They have found this alwayes the choicest expedient, and best policy in a dangerous time, which hath observably met them, when they had most to doe; A thing whereof they have reaped the fruits in the day of their strait, and times of judgement, yea, though it hath occasioned sometime their sufferings, yet it hath been also their safety, and protection from sadder sufferings.

4. That though integrity is oft under a dark cloud of reproach, yet it winneth still well out from under the same, and hath shined usually more bright afterward. So as they might have had cause to observe, what unexpected meanes the Lord hath made use of, for their clearing.

5. That while their enemies might have (were it not for the preventing goodnes of God) quarrelled upon some other ground, they have been observably led to pursue, and make them the but of their malice for their honesty and that wherein they have peace before God, and have been kept from hitting on the right cause.

6. They finde how unspeakably sweet this is upon an after reckoning, and in the evening of their life, that then they reap a comfortable harvest, of that they have sown

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with much suffering, and teares; O! then it doth not repent them that integrity was their choice.

7. They have sometime found a hundred fold even in this life, and an observable upmaking in in that. which they have been willing to losse, and hazard most.

8. They must also say, integrity was never their ruine, but an outgate was oft brought about in a way they could not have expected, yea the Lords shutting all other doores upon them, hath been that he might open one himself, like Hagers well springing up in the wilderness.

9. That in making their aime, when they had a large heart for God, they have not then wanted an opportunity for evidencing the same, their encouragement hath abounded with their duty, and they have got much in, in giving much out for Christ, that there was no such feast in the world, as they have sensibly found in the testimony of a good conscience.

EIGHT Instance is that promise which is held forth to the Christian in the word, of strength, and assistance to go about duties. If. 40: 29, 30, 31. Ps. 18: 16, 14. Ps. 84: 5. Ps. 68: 28.

To clear this, that it hath an unquestionable performance, I attest the experience of the generation of the righteous; who ever knew what it was to serve the Lord in the spirit, who by many sensible confirmations, have not proven the certainty of these things?

First that when they have gone about duty under much deadnes, and straitnes of spirit, they have found a very sensible enlargement, and got their bonds loosed, which surely they could no more command, without the concurrence of divine help, and something above nature, then these who spread our the sail can command a fair wind, when it is crosse.

2. That Gods help, and concurrence, was never more discernable carrying them through, & making them strong, then in the day, that, to their own sense, they were most

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weak, when they have gone about duty under greatest feares, and fainting in spirit.

3. That when they had most confidence in themselves, and judged they were at greatest advantage in their going about some duty, they have usually had the saddest retreat; and found that a sure truth, the race is not to the swift; nor the battel to the strong.

4. They know well what an influence divine concurrence hath, not only upon their inward frame, but also upon the exercise of their gifts, yea, upon the commonest stabilities of judgement, and memory, and that there is a most remarkable difference, betwixt themselves at one time, and another, according to the blowing of this wind.

5. They must also witness this as their experience, they found duty never more easy to them; then when they have had most to doe, and were kepted throngest therein; yea, when much work was laid on their hand, they then wanted not an enlarged allowance for the same.

6. That their spirits have been fitted for duty, and carried through difficulties, where at some other time, and in another frame they would have fainted, and thereby seen; that none needs to scarre at any piece of duty, when God calleth them to it, for while difficulties have appeared greatest at first, the lesse they have found them afterward, yea; the hardest piece of service oft made most easy.

7. They finde God doth raise the spirit of his followers with a suitable elevation for their work, and can fit them for the service of that time, and other trials thereof; even beyond their ordinary reach.

8. That there is an open doore, and sensible assistance, when there hath been work for the Gospel in such a place, while on the other hand they have found an inhibition sensibly served on them, the doore as it were shut when the tide was going back, and the word of the Gospel at a stand in such a part.

9. That it is not greatest abilities which make undertakings succesful, it being in vain to rise up early without the Lord.

10. It hath oft been their experience, that in following the way of God, his candle did then shine upon their paths, the Spirit of the Lord was with them, and sensibly let out, the withdrawing whereof hath been no lesse discernable, while they turned aside from him, that they have then been put to bear the burden alone, and found difficulty, and dependency of spirit at once growing upon their hand.

11. I may adde what these who are serious in Religion have oft tried, that there is no such help, and furniture, for going about duties as a spiritual frame, and neernes with God, for then light, and counsel, inward freedome, and sweet composure of spirit have brought most sensible advantage to them, their greatest, yea and in their most common undertakings, this hath been very evident.

NINTH Instance, is that great promise, we have Rom. 8. ver. 28. That all things shall work together for good to them who love God, and Psal. 25. ver. 10. All the paths of the Lord are mercy, and truth to such as keep his Covenant. I confesse it is not easy sometimes to reconcile Gods way and this piece of his Word together, these who take only an ordinary passing look of providence, cannot well judge, how such things, wherewith oft the godly in their life are tryed, should contribute to their good, and advantage; while nothing would seem more directly crosse to the same; But the Christian, and wise observer can give another account, they know what a sure truth this is, that there is no real jarr betwixt the promise and providence of God in this matter; and what ever be the present thoughts, patient on- waiting hath had cause to say this.

1. When his way and their thoughts have most differed, in the accomplishment of his Word, and bringing about their mercy, they have found it was to their advantage, that his choice was alwayes better then theirs, yea they have been oft made to confesse, that their saddest disappointments therein have tended to their further upmaking.

2. That

2. That the Lords denying them some outward thing which they have most desired, they have found (as afterwards hath appeared) was to grant them more then their desire: he hath refused them as it were in an Ishmael, that he might give them an Isaac.

3. They can oft say they had been undone if they had not been uddone; that it was their mercy, the Lord took such a way to cast them in a fever, to prevent a lethargy, and by some sharp crosse, gave them a wound in the flesh, to cure and let out some grosse impostume in their soul, which should have made their case worse.

4. How greatest shakings have helped their further establishment, so as they were never more confirmed then in that about which they have been most brangled; yea, they have also found this the Lords way to cure their frowardnes, and misbeleef by some further addition to their crosse; that when they would not beleeeve, he hath caused them come in upon a greater disadvantage, while as a small affliction hath made them impatient, a more heavy, and pressing trouble hath been their cure, and helped them to keep silence under Gods hand.

5. That the growing of difficulties in their way, and some further pressure in the trial, they have found, it was from the Lord, in order to its removal, and to the bringing forth of some greater good, and that all visible grounds of confidence have been oft broken, but with this upmaking, that their mercy, they had it more immediatly out of Gods own hand, yea that the lesse moderation was whilst their trial hath come to an extremity, they have found it then upon the turn, and their hope, and encouragement oft made to spring up therewith.

6. How the Lords deferring their mercy which they had oft sought hath been indeed their mercy, and advantage, which did alwayes tryst them in the season, yea they must say his way is alwayes nearest, and waiting on God without making haste, doth truly make the quickest dispatch.

7. Their experience can also wicnes, how mens reproach and outing their malice that way to ruine their reputa-

ration: hath oft been the very mean, ordered by the Lord, to bring forth their further clearing, and vindication, even by that very mean.

8. How by some sad crosse he doth oft prevent a sadder, which though strange at first, they have been forced upon after discovery to confesse: The man who riding in haste to the sea port, to have passage over seas with a ship going then off, fell and broke his leg by the way, which was the saving of his life, for the ship, and all its passengers perished in that voyage, yet this was a bitter astonishing providence to him for the present.

9. How their losse even by some sad slip, and failing in their spiritual condition, hath really tended to their further humbling and advantage, yea, that which brought them under some visible decay, as to the wonted lustre of their Christian profession, hath helped them to grow more under ground, to the root, and substantial of Christianity.

10. They can tell how these steps of the providence of God, which seemed most crosse to that design he was carrying on, yea, looked like the very crushing of their hope, have oft been the very mean which hath wrought most effectually to bring about their mercy.

11. I shall adde but this, as the Christians witness to the truth of this promise, that sharpest reproofs they have seemed the wounds of a friend, most pressing straits, made the mean for their further enlargement, how the Lord hath brought them into some dark, and plunging trial, which then looked like a fearful pitt, that he might bring them out with advantage, set their feet on a rock, and establish their goings, yea, that in the hottest furnace, they lost nothing, but what they might well spare, even some of their drosse.

TENTH Instance I shall here set down, is that general promise made to Godlines, and these who make it their serious study, that it shall be great gain, that verily it shall be well with the righteous, for they shall eat the fruit of their labour, and in keeping of the command there is a great reward, 1 Tim. 6:6. 1 Pet. 3:12, 13. Ps. 19:11. This

This is indeed a great concerning truth ; but a truth which I am sure none who did ever make earnest of religion will call in question ; many sure convincing experiments hath the Christian had thereof through his life, such wants not some diary and record, wherein they can cast up the advantage, they have reaped in cloffe following of God, and their duty, yea from most remarkable providences, they may oft say, *This I had because I kept thy precepts*, now that this promise hath a large witness I shall here touch some things which I may with some confidence say, both in the present, and in former times hath been proved, and sealed by the saints in their experience.

1. That they never more effectually consulted their good, & advantage, then when they did with greatest singlenes consult their duty, and least with flesh, and blood ; they did never more truely seek themselves, then in the practice of self denial, yea in that they intended God most, and least their privat interest, they have therein found a very sensible upmaking.

2. That a serious endeavour to walk before God acceptably they have found still the best policy, even in the worst of time, and have found his way then very satisfying, while it was most their study how to please him, yea they have been obliged to confesse, that when the Lords way was their choice, they have found it also their reward.

3. They have found more real joy & peace in withstanding temptations, then in any thing the temptation offered, and in laying their interest at Gods feet, and their will underneath his, more then in all their carnal enjoyments : O the taste, & testimony of Gods approbation ! how sweet a smile is his, in whose countenance Heaven lieth.

4. That inward peace, and tranquillity of mind, a sweet calm, and composure of spirit, doth as really attend a spiritual frame, and waik, as the shadow the body, and their best, and most comfortable dayes, wherein they have truly walked at liberty, have been when their heart

was most subject to the Law, with a single respect to the same.

5. That Religion, and a spiritual walk is the best friend even as to a contented, and comfortable life here in the World, and that they have then most access to enjoy themselves, and their lot with satisfaction, when they enjoy God, yea, that neernes, and communion with him, tendeth to the sublimating, & refining of their natural spirit, and hath been an observable help to their very common abilities and parts.

6. That there is truly a reality in the blessing, which maketh a small thing signify much, and yeeld more, then greater abundance.

7. That when they give God their heart, it is then sweet, and matter of satisfaction to observe his wayes, and their observation thereof is very refreshing, how far the Lord condescends to their desires when they sum them all up in himself, and make him their delight.

8. That the pleasure of Religion is in the practice thereof, and the way to have Religion easy, is to be thoroughly religious, duty is then sweet when men do from an inward principle; and holines should be a more pleasant work, yea, a reward to its selfe, if there were lesse mixture of hypocrisy.

9. That real humility, and walking low in their own eyes, and before God, did never lose to them respect, and credit from men; but self-abasement doth observably go before lifting up, and true honour followeth such, who least hunt after vain applause from the World.

10. That when they were more faithfull to observe, & improve a little, for their encouragement, more hath been added, & they never wanted matter to be thankful, when opportunities laid to their hand were improved and taken hold of for that end, yea, they have found there is a mercy within a mercy, and some peculiar mercy in every crosse, which is only found and brought forth by the exercised serious improver of the same.

11. That much sincerity hath also much sense following

ving the same, secret honesty before God hath mett them openly before men, and faithfulness in Christian freedom purchased them more favour, and respect even from the worst, then when they studied most to please them in a sinful way.

12. That they never saw more clearly the gain, & real advantage of Godlines, & what a difference there is betwixt these that serve God, and these that serve him not, as in a time of trouble, and strait, how then tendernes in their former walk, and that which they entertained in the morning, doth now meet them at night, and pay them home with advantage in an houre of temptation.

13. They have been forced to observe that there is an invincible guard about his People in their duty, that the Ministry of the Angels towards such is no delusion, and have oft been made to wonder how hazard within an hairbreadth hath been prevented, relief, & help come as betwixt the bridge, and the water; how they have been sensibly preserved amidst greatest dangers, while, as it were, an inhibition hath been served upon these, that they should come near, but not hurt, and only mett with them, that they might read their preservation from them.

14. That an enlarged heart doth meet with an enlarged allowance, and bearing burden with others of the People of God, hath helped to make their own private burden the lighter.

15. That real Godlines, and Religion, hath as much in hand, as it may be a reward to its self; which beautifieth the soul, and maketh the face; and conversation to shine with an observable lustre, that guardeth and preserveth the heart from many vexing crosses, preventeth sad strokes, and sorrowes that others are pierced with, who will follow their idols, and the wayes of sin, which are bitter in the close.

In a word, this is surely found, that God is the best friend, and when there is peace with him, things without do not offend, but they shall then understand what it is to be in league with the beasts of the field and stones of the

ground, having a sweet agreement with all the providence and dispensations that come in their way.

V. *That the Scripture threatnings have also a certain accomplishment*, are found to be sad earnest, and do not fail to the ground, the Christian can also seal from his experience.

It is not here to be understood the threatnings of wrath (from which beleevvers are freed in Christ,) but of a fatherly displeasure, which because of sin, may draw deep, yea, bring forth very dreadful effects, to witnes that it is an evil, and bitter thing to depart from God, and that their own doings shall chastise them; & these threatnings of the Covenant, *If thy children forsake my Law, I will punish their transgression with rods, &c. Ps. 89:30.* are sure truths which want not in every time a performance.

To clear this (ere I speak any thing particularly) I would premit somethings to be considered.

1. That the word is a perpetual rule, which in every time must take place, & though affliction is a peece of the common misery of man, yet, doth it not arise out of the dust, neither fall out at an adventure, but doth oft visibly follow the tract of sin, as a slouthhound, pointing at such evils as the cause, by the stroak, and at the truth & fulfilling of the threatnings, written upon both.

2. We should adore his sovereignty whose way both in the measure, and manner of his peoples chastisement is so various, as that none can infallibly conclude, what he is to do in such a case, I mean we are not to limit the Lord to such a way, and method in his working; yet, this we may assert, and firmly conclude, that not only the threatnings of the word have a performance, but men may also have, even beforehand some more then probable conjecture, yea, a clear discovery, what such a case doth threaten, and what will be the issue of a sinful course, by considering the Lords ordinary procedure, both with themselves and others, how sin hath very sad affects, and his way

providence in all ages is still uniforme agreeing with its selfe, and with the word.

3. Though a gracious state doth surely privileged from wrath, and condemnation, yet not from affliction, and sad stroaks of divine anger because of sin; for he taketh vengeance on mens inventions, even when he will spare the inventors.

4. The Lord doth oft contend with his People for their folly, and miscarriages, more severely then with others, and will not let passe in them that which he passeth by in the World, without being a reprovcr; but when light, and love, and the Law will not hedge in their way, he will set briars, & thornes, before them, yea, speak by chastisement upon their bones, to withdraw men from their purpose.

5. It is known, how very deep the holy Anger of God may draw against his children, even sometims, to pursue them out of the land of the living, & follow them to the grave, with some remarkable stroak, yea, it hath made them dreadful examples of judgement in this life, for whom, he hath accepted an eternal sacrifice in Christ.

6. I shall adde, this is the Lords blessed end in making out his threatnings against his People, that they should not perish with the World. O! what a blest exchange is it, that the flaming sword which once stood to guard the tree of life, doth now stand as it were in the way of the saints, to keep them from running into the pathes of death.

Having premitted these things, I shall now instance, some particular evils, wherewith the godly are ready to be overtaken, which the word doth expressely threaten, and hold forth the hazard of, both as to outward, and spiritual stroakes, and give in here the Christians witness from their experience in all ages of the truth of these threatnings.

FIRST. *Security, and carnal confidence*, which we finde the word doth threaten, is an evil wherewith Christians are ready to be overtaken; but they do also know by sad

sad experience, what bitter fruit this brings forth, and that therein the word falleth not to the ground, which is held forth. *Hos. 2. 1. 9. Hos. 7. 9. Isay. 30. 16. 17.*

First that a secure condition is the usual forerunner of some sad change, that when they are most at ease in a dull and dead temper of spirit, some sharp rousing dispensation is upon the back of it, either a grosse sin, or a searching crosse, as a thorn in the bed of their security to put them to their feet.

2. That seldom reckoning with the conscience, the running on of counts for some time upon their hand, doth unravel their case, unto a sad confusion and maketh it a bitter, and heartlesse work to retire alone, or within themselves, yea, hath a most direct tendency to a further hardening, and real upgiving with their duty.

3. That when security, and deadnes groweth within, it quickly maketh them dry up, and wither without, in the external performance of duty, and in that vigorous, lively appearance which did formerly lustre their walk, and carriage before others, so as very bystanders may read the languishing of grace, in the dead exercise of their gifts.

4. That going about duty with most confidence in themselves doth usually give them the most clear discovery of their weakness, yea, when they have least lookt for any crosse, they have then been sure to meet with it with that sad addition, of being a surprisal in a secure condition, whereas on the other hand they may tell, what refreshing disappointments they have got where some trials have been most feared and lookt for.

5. That secure sporting with a temptation, may soon turn to sad earnest, & they have found it very hard to dance about the fire, & not be burnt, & the temptation, which at a distance seemed small upon a neerer approach, they have found had more bands on their heart, and was another thing then they could have beleaved.

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they have also found, have given them the saddest disappointment, the putting of them in Gods room, and out of their own place hath been the way to cause them miscarry, yea, to turn their crosse, whereas they have oft seen some thing unexpected, made the mean of their help, that they might know meanes are ordered of the Lord, and are useful, because he maketh them so.

7. Their experience can also witness that carnal confidence despising the trial at a distance, is usually punished with carnal diffidence, and despondency of spirit under the same, one extremity made the punishment of the other, like the hote, and cold fits of an ague, which doe mutually make one the other more intense, yea, that their immoderat confidence and expectation of a thing, hath after resolved in as immoderat discouragement, as their stroke.

SECOND. *The Christians unwatchfulness,* and intermitting in the exercise of that so necessary and commanded duty, we finde the Word threateneth, and holdeth forth the hazard thereof, *Lest ye enter into temptation,* the outmaking whereof their experience can also witness, *Luk. 21: v. 34. 36. Math. 26: ver. 41.*

1. That it is not easy to guid their walk, and conversation when their guard over the heart doth slacken, but the giving loose reins for a little may make such a sad, and large breach, that many many dayes will not easily make up, yea they doe also know, how a sensible withdrawing of the Spirit, and drying up of their life, and liberty, is the usual fruit which unwatchfulness brings forth.

2. That this helpeth to make their sun-blinks short, causeth a low ebbe after the greatest enlargement, whilest they doe not guard against their peculiar evils, and that usually there doth haunt such a condition, the swelling of the flesh, when the spirit is most enlarged, which will soon put them as far behind, as they formerly thought themselves at an advantage.

3. That when once the heart lieth open, it is quickly

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seised on, and made a prey, with what a bitter sting doe it return, after it hath taken liberty to wander? yea, doe find there is a swift progresse that sin hath from the thought to the rolling of it to the imagination, and thence to the affection, wherewith it is more easy to engage, then to shake this off.

4. That unwatchfulnes hath oft turned the most special times, and opportunities for advantage to the greatest loss, which through their neglect of these, hath put them further behind then they were, it hath turned their retirement and solitude, to be their snare, made the desert worse and more dangerous then the city, and made them find that vain thoughts the following whereof seemeth pleasant to the mouth, will prove gall, and wormwood in the belly, there being no sadder company then a mans spirit loose upon it selfe, whilst they cannot stop that current whereto they had given a vent.

5. Their experience of this can witness that unwatchfulnes hath an undoubted tendency to cast off prayer, how hard is it in the evening to retire to God, whilst the heart is abroad all the day? To be Religious in Worship, when men are not so in their walk? Yea they doe find that this will bring their distemper within, out at doors to some disorder, impertinency, or passion in their words, or outward communication, a thing which experience may tell doth wound the soul, make a sad breach in their peace, and doth quickly overcloud the Spirit, and unfit them for communion with God, and going about of spiritual duties.

THIRD. *To restrain prayer, and neglect calling on God is an evil also which the Word doth threaten, and hold forth the same hazard thereof, as of unwatchfulnes, lest ye enter into temptation, yea; that this is even a step to the casting off fear, the Christians experience, from frequent trial can witness, that this Scripture threatening is true, Mark. cap. 26: ver. 41, Job 15: ver. 4.*

of the Scripture.

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1. That they have found this the rise, which giveth life, and increase to their prevailing evils, and that corruption then is upon a sensible growth, as the lively exercise of prayer begins to be intermitted.

2. That this weareth out their spiritual life, and bringeth a consumption upon the vital spirits of Christianity, so that these who sometime flourished, and kept green, as by the sent of water, that correspondence which they had with the fountain of their life, while his dew did ly all night on their branches, hath through neglect of prayer been brought to a poor shadow; so although sometimes the greatnes of their lose and distemper, hath been hid from themselves, yet, might be easily discerned by on-lookers.

3. That wearing out of prayer, and of delight therein, will quickly make them disrelish any other piece of Religion, put them out of frame to meditat, or to give thanks; or entertain fellowship with the Saints, yea, the more lively, and spiritual these are, it maketh them the more a burden, and torment to them.

4. That wearing out of this is a strong temptation to a further forbearance, and will sensibly wear them out of any sense of their need thereof, and make them strangers to themselves and to their own case, so that they shall finde, the lesse they are in this exercise, the further they shall be indisposed & the fewer errands they have, the lesse felt necessity of the same.

5. Their experience can also witnes that litle prayer maketh a heavy burden, doth multiply their straits, and cause their care grow as this is abaited; they must then bear their burden alone, and with heavines take counsel within themselves, while they ply not this blest tried remedy to make their requests in all things known to God.

FOURTH. We find the Word doth threaten defection from the truth, and turning from the way of God in a time of trial, as an evil into which these that are kept by grace from final apostasie may yet through the violence of a temptation

1. That

tation fall. *Jer. 9. ver. 13. 15. Psal. 89. ver. 30, 32. Job. 8. ver. 11.* and their sad experience can witness, the truth of the Scripture threatnings concerning this also, while they have found.

1. That in one day they may adventure on that, which through most of their life they have not win above, but hath made them go with their back bowed down to the grave; that their giving the Lords work a wrong touch, is one of these things which doth scarcely leave them all their time, but, beyond other sins they have found this still come up with a bitter, and heavy reflexion; yea, in the evening of their life they have found this so sore on their spirit, that it could not ly hid or silent but were forced to witness their sense of it before the World, ere they could win to any ease.

2. That this the Lord doth usually meet, with some sharp and publick reproof even before men, that though he pardon his People, yea, give some sensible intimation thereof to their souls, yet, he hath non past them, as to some visible mark of his displeasure, because of such a thing.

3. They see that a crooked, and uncleanly way proves not the mean of extricating them out of trouble, but their straits have been made to grow therewith, yea they have found that which they eshewed in Gods way, hath more sadly trysted them in another rod, and that there is a thick dreg in the bottom of the cup, which maketh it worse to drink thereof at the close, then at the beginning.

4. That it is not easy to make a stand in turning aside from the way of God, when once they are engaged, a retrograd motion is very violent, and yeelding in a little will bring with it some necessity of going further, as a judicial stroke.

5. That sitting of some clear opportunity, to give a testimony for the truth, when called thereto, hath turned to be their judgement, that they should not have further access, or be made usefull that way; a thing truly obvious to such, as are wise to observe the judgements of

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God in their time; yea, likewise that publick backsliding, doth oft visibly wear men out of personal tendernes.

FIFTH. Unsubduednesse of spirit, and want of mortification to outward things, the Word doth clearly threaten, and hold out its hazard, the accomplishment whereof Christians experience can witness, Rom. 8. ver. 6, 7.

1. That God hath oft turned their idol to be their crosse; put a mark of his jealousy on their dearest things, when once they put them in his room, yea, frequent observation of the Lords way both with themselves, and others doth shew, if they would be quite of a thing, they may set their heart immoderately on it, such eagernes and exorbitancy of affection being a sure presage, it shall either be their judgement or sorrow or cease to be.

2. That outward things did never yeeld lesse then whilst they press them most, that when they are eager in pursuit of the World, and satisfaction there, their spirits are sensibly hurried with many perturbations, so that they must say, that which keepeth them from enjoying of God doth also hinder the comfortable enjoying of themselves.

3. They have found that slow advance in the work of mortification, hath at last doubled their smart, and been the concurring cause of some very sharp cure, when the disease did come to that height, that a small and ordinary potion could not do the turn.

4. That immoderat desire, and pressing after an outward thing, they have sometime got answered, but therewith a sharp reproof from the Lord, yea, usually have found small satisfaction in their enjoying that, about which they were so unsober in their pursuit, give children, or else I dye, said Rachel, she got children and she dyed, in bringing one of them forth.

5. Their experience can also witness how overcaring anxiety hath oft caused things thrive worse under their hand, whilst they found never a more satisfying issue in

a particular, then by a quiet, submissive dependence on the Lord for the same.

SIXTH. *The doing violence to light*, and sinning with a witnes against the conscience, as it is clearly threatned in the Word so likewayes the sad effects thereof hath been clearly witnessed, in all ages. *Prov. 29. ver. 1. Psal. 81. ver. 11. 12.*

1. What a direct tendency this hath to the further darkning of their light, and to a judicial hardning, and that reproofs not entertained do usually become lesse frequent, yea, lesse pungent, and searching; their heart then doth not so easily smite them, and put the tear in their eye, as sometimes a word, or secret rebuke of the conscience would have done, so as they can now digest greater things, who would sometimes have stood at that, which comparatively was very small.

2. That when they would not read their bosom distemper, which both by the word, and conscience was pointed out, others have got leave to read the same written on their forehead, and the shifting of discovered guilt, and of all serious endeavour to get the quarrel taken up in secret betwixt God, and them, hath brought the matter at last, to some publick hearing, even before the generation.

3. That their darkening of their light upon some private interest, while they would again, and again enquire if such a thing be warrantable, concerning which the Lord had once cleared their minde, is a most perillous thing, yea hath got an answer according to the idol of their heart, and their choice made to be their judgement.

I shall but adde what bitter, and sad experience can tell, how dreadful it is to give the conscience a wramp which is more easily hurt then healed, that deliberat adventuring on the occasion of a temptation, when they would goe to the high priests hall without warrant, or a calling, hath cost them dear; and they have found that bold sinning doth afterward make faint beleeving.

(¶) I know

of the Scripture.

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(¶) I know it is by the serious and experienced Christians, and by these only, this argument in the meaning thereof can be reached, and it is sure, such will not debate the same, who know the truth, and have it dwelling in them, and on another ground then report are established in its certaintie; for these can witness what sweet comforting houres they have had with Jesus Christ in a sad uncomfortable time, that he hath both spoken, and himself also hath done it, and must therefore seale his word and the truth thereof, because he hath sealed it on their heart; yea, do so surely know, it is God who worketh all their works in them, that with their last words and dying breath, they have confidence to assert this, and commend that excellent studie of godlinesse to others.

I know that with a great many of the World, this grave convincing argument of experience hath no weight, for strangers intermedle not with that joy, and therefore fancie it a pure fiction, as the only expedient and preservative to their heart, from the horror and inexpressible torment, which must seale on them, if the certaintie and necessity of godlinesse were granted; these scoff at this excellent thing, as some vain conceit or distemper; because they would have it so. But with such, I must here crave a serious and free communing, yea in so great and concerning a businesse must obtest they would not shut their eyes, but allow reason that weight, they would do in any other case; O what do you alleadge, on what ground do you reject this great witness of experience? If you deny it, because you have not found it, doe not others assert this, because they surely know it? And their assertion hath these two advantages, one, that they once had the same sentiment and opinion with you, which now they reflect on with much horror. 2. The realitie of its effects on them proves both the realitie of the cause, and the excellencie thereof; and now if these be indeed serious, and their testimonie true whom you thus challenge, are you not in a sad & dreadful case? since you cannot think to lodge together at night, or that your interest and theirs will meet in another world, which

hath been so verie oppositie here by the way; yow must surely part with these at death, and land at some other porte, to whom all your life you have walked so crofs: O fit but with your selves alone, and consider this, you hate ferious Religion, and therefore you reprobach it; will you take such a revenge on your selves, and out of prejudice to it, runne on so great and eternall a ruine? But know assuredly, it is not what you judged, and if once you pass in this delusion that great and last step betwixt time and eternity, you are undone, oh undone for ever! And sure if you admit the authority of this Scripture, you cannot debate the Christians experience, while there you have so great a cloude of witnesses, who bear that same testimonie, but it is on your selfe-you must reflect, not on the truth, that you know so little in this way.

Now to leave some conviction on the Atheists of this time, and these who take libertie to scoff at serious Religion, I would here offer some rational grounds, which even to the World and bystanders may convincingly demonstrat, if they would but consider the same in earnest, that this testimony the Saints doe in all ages bear, from their experience, to the truths, can be no cunning device or falshood, but is most certain and true; for.

1. That must be a sure testimonie, and is no cheate, if you judge these who declare the same have the sense of a Deitie and have any truth, or morall candour, for it is a clear dilemma, either such, whose witness this is, are impostours of the highest degree, yea in Atheisme and gross deceit must exceed all the world beside, or, it is true and valide what they witness; now for the first, I shall crave no more in their behalfe, but an appeale to your conscience and sober thoughts, if you could judge thus.

2. This testimony must be sure, if you but allow these the use of judgment and reason who bear it, and do not judge them wholly demented; for it were a strange and unheard madnes, that men would pursue a shadow, with so great seriousness, and on this interest venture so farr, if Religion and the power thereof were not a reality; sure

one of these two must hold, if Christians do not experience themselves, what they hold out to others, that they are either in the highest measure profligate, and wicked, even beyond the ordinary rate and depravation of humane nature, or, they must be under a strange madness, and *delirium*; they must either designe to cheat the World, or themselves; but though their adversaries could wish to have it so, I think their malice will not make them so mad, as to own that challenge, and since these cannot be alledged, I profess were I the greatest Atheist who did not own the Scripture, I could not seriously consider the way, and walk of such who are tender Christians without astonishment, or conceive how in such a world, and at so many visible disadvantages, they should be thus engaged, on any other consideration, then the truth and reality of Christianity.

3. Do you not see, this is their testimony, who are willing to be tried therein, and render a reason of that hope which is in them? yea, doe in this offer themselves to trial, and with greatest seriousness obtest the world, not to credite implicitly their witness, and take it on trust, but themselves put it to the most exact inquiry and search, and truly if there be an appeale and reference to mens sense and feeling, which can admit no debate, I know not what access they have to question this witness, until they first put it to an essay, that from their own experience, they could contradict the same.

4. Should you not admit this for a sure testimony, if you grant any moral certainty of a thing, that there is some case wherein a humane testimony can allow no debate, which in this present case must be undeniable; for you know by two witnesses a matter is judicially established: but is it not more confirming when they are of known judgment and integrity? yea out of diverse and remote places of the earth, and otherwayes strangers amongst themselves, but yet more, not onely when dying they owne and assert this, but are willing to dye upon a testimony thereto, and seale it with their blood, and this also through all ages renewed; O what can be more convincing as to

moral certainty? Now I do attest the world if this argument of Christian experience have not as full and unanswerable proofs of its certainty.

5. This witness can be no counterfeit, and you must judge they are worthy of credite, to verify the Scripture from experience, on whose practice you see it so convincingly transcribed, should not the declaration of such anent the truth of the promise, have much weight whilst you see what a serious respect these have to the rule, to have their walk ordered in that way, where the Scripture warrants them to expect the fulfilling of the promise; And are not these seen to be the most tender serious Christians, whose way useth to have greatest authority over your conscience, who do most own this witness, and hath the largest account to give thereof.

6. Is not this their testimony also, whom on your exactest and narrow notice, you may see studies Religion, in the secret and retired duties thereof? where some other interest then the observation of men must be an incitement; yea, may you not observe there are such, who do seriously owne the practice of these duties when the view of these about them, might be a greater lett, and ground of fear, then any perswading motive? and whilst you challenge the light profession of many within the Church, do but also ask your conscience if there be not such, whose way you must justify, even over the belly of your hatred and prejudice against them, that it hath a convincing savour of humility? yea, their growth under the ground, and being serious and real in what they profess may be clearly discerned from a naked and empty shew.

7. Can these intend by such a testimony to deceive others; who have oft been in so great fear and disquiet, that they be not themselves deceived? O how convincing may this be to the world to consider what perplexing queries, and doubts Christians have sometime about their own inward case, yea after such sharp wrestlings a most sweet calme and compsure of spirit may be discerned; it is strange this puts not Atheists to a more serious inquiry, what

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such changes can mean, which will make men differ so far from themselves, whilst no outward cause can be discerned; It is true some matters lie much under ground, the heart knows its own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy, yea, the deepest plunge and exercise may make little noise without, yet this is sure, there is so much under these vicissitudes, that is obvious even to the view of onlookers as may leave some conviction, their enjoyments must be true and real when the want thereof is so sensibly felt, & the world is not so stupidly inadvertent, not to observe this, if they did not shut their eyes for fear of such a discovery.

8. Should not their testimony be very convincing whose complaints and challenges you may find more at home upon themselves, then against others, who are oft bemoaning over these evils which the eyes of man could not reach; may not the world see how some are prest with anguish of soul to the wasting of their body when no cause from without is known, and otherwise rational and most composed; yea, may it not sometimes be discerned there is more smothered within, which gets no vent, then appears without? for griefe in earnest wants not some peculiar marks, by which it may be witnessed to others, I think this should put the world to such a reflection, there must be some griefe and joy and a cause for it, which goes above the world or the things thereof.

9. This is their testimony, whose confidence and composure of spirit in the greatest exigences may witness to others that perswasion they have of the truth within their souls; You see also at what labour and work these are in the duties of religion; yea, when they are most serious, how native and unconstrained their motions are; O doth not this show the grace of God, and a new nature is another thing then words, & that they must surely find satisfaction in these duties which makes it to them a special delight and pleasure, which you would reckon an intollerable and sore toyle.

10. Doe you not see how these agree every where and at every time anent this testimony, that the Scripture is veri-

sied by experience, and the breathings and influences of God on the soul tryts them in the way of duty according to the promise, even whilst they most remarkably differ amongst themselves in their natural temper and disposition; and is it not known whatever particular and lesser difference, through the prevalence of corruption, are too frequent amongst these, yet no challenge, no reflection on the truth in reality of godliness in it selfe will be found when their challenges are most bitter one upon another; I must further attest your conscience, whilst you have heard the sad regret of dying Christians anent the interest of their soul and shortcoming in the study of godliness, have not these complaints been still to commend Religion, & the excellency thereof, and reflect only upon themselves; but none ever was heard to have such a complaint, that they did cheat the world in that matter, by obtruding upon them a falshood.

11. May you not see this testimony which Christians give to the way of godliness, that it is from these who acts deliberately in that great interest, and have a rational account to give of the grounds on which they walk, and doe you not find they are men as well as Christians, that none are more friends to reason and the right exercise thereof, then such who are most seriouse in the study of Religion; It is sure could the world have their sight, and with Moses such a look of an invisable God, it would be easy for them to be of their judgment also.

12. That you are so ready to chalenge the Christians testimony, may you not finde the true cause within your selfe; not from your judgment, but a rooted prejudice and enmity at the way of the Lord, whereof yow can give no reason; yea have you not oft reproached Christians at a distance, whom upon a more near particular acquaintance, you have from some irresistable conviction left upon you, been forced to justifie? For godliness hath this singular advantage to silence all its adversaries that none will challenge or reproach the same, but these who never knew it, and should such a witness be admitted? O strange with what

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erry men can deride this, who yet dare not goe alone to have some serious thoughts about it.
13. I know you will not deny there is such a thing as hypocrisie and a false shew of godliness, yet sure you have no ground of challenge, or to question the truth and power of this, which is so convincingly witnessed to, even by hypocrisy; for there should be no use for such a cover, no cause for that imposture, if there were not also a truth, and reality therein; you cannot conceive a counterfeit, but as it stands related to that which is true; if there were not such a thing as serious godliness, the world could never have known how to personate it; could there be a lie, if there were not a truth? You see also that it is the most serious discerning Christians, such usually doe fear, and have an awful regard of, for which there were no ground, if they were not conscious of the truth of that in others, whereof they only study the appearance, yea, here I must also appeale the world and ordinarie onlookers, if there be not, even to them, some discernable difference betwixt the power of Religion, and an empty shew, (though this make greater noyse) betwixt these who are serious and tender in following the Lord, and others who glory in appearance, but not in heart; for the one by a convincing manifestation of the truth do's commend it selfe to mens conscience, hath a living air and breath, which by no art or cunning can be drawn to the life, no more then an exquisite painter with the choicest colours in drawing a man upon a brood can there-with draw the vitall acts of breathing and moving.

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14. May you not see holiness must be some excellent thing, which hath such credite, even with it's reall adversaries, and the worst of men, to make them grasp, at the appearance and shadow of that, which others know, they hate the power and practice thereof; And here I would ask the world, is it not to the Scripture and truth thereof, the experience of the Saints bears witness, that they doe indeed feel and prove within their soul, what yow see written before you, in this blessed record, but is it not also sure that nothing is more directly cross and opposite to the

the Scripture, then a false appearance and shew of that which is not real?

15. Can yow debate, there are such Christians in the world, yea, many such whose experience do's witness the truth of religion, of whom it must be said (even their enemies being judges) their being serious in that way, and choyse thereof, must be for it self, and hath no outward designe or interest, to which it can be subservient, whilst in this oft they runne the greatest hazard & are rendred prey to others? O must it not be a marvelous thing, which hath that dominion over the souls, to teach men the practice of self-denyal, not onely to quite, but a chearful quitting their nearest interest, to smile on the spoilers, to rejoice in their suffering and reproaches, to forgive wrongs, and take revenge by good will; this is indeed above nature, and is only peculiar to Christianity, which can also turn poyson to an antidote and cure, and gaine by its greatest losses.

16. You may see what different syzes are amongst the Saints, how great a difference also betwixt the experiences of one and another; some made to witness much bitterness in departing from God, and others that singular advantage in drawing neer to him, yea, how neer sometimes will great extreames in their condition, border with others; at a strait to expresse their joy, who not long before would have thought a vent to their grief a special ease; O must not this be a matter of earnest, and when you see how much these amongst themselves doe thus differ, that yet all these differences meet together, and concurs in a most cleare testimonie to the Scripture, and truth of godliness; yea, how this wonderfull contrivance of the Scripture is fited to answer all this variety of changes in the Christians case, and passeth none over.

But oh, what can be said here, where weeping should be more fit then words, to see what contempt the great part of men puts on serious religion, which doth truly raise them above the condition of the beasts; is not the atheisme of the time at that height that we must say the assault of the

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adversarie is not so much at one single truth, as at the root and being of all religion? And truly we may fear some sharp and extraordinarie cure to recover this generation of a disease, that would seem in an ordinarie way incurable; I shall but further offer these few queries, and plead so far with the adversarie, that they would ere they pass them have but some serious thoughts thereon.

1. If there be a God, or a truth in any Religion, is it not with this blessed record of the Scripture you must close as the alone rule thereof? yea, if your judgment and conscience be not both extinct, must you not consent to the law and doctrine therein held forth, that it is good, what ever be your aversion therefrom? 2. Is not an immortal soul, and a being for ever such a venture as is of more value, and should be to you, then the whole world? 3. O can you be thus indetermined about so great an interest, you seem to be hesitant and unsure if there be an other world, a heaven, or a hell, but oh, are you sure these are not, and how then can you be secured from such a fear, which of all fears is the greatest? 4. What a horride and uncomfortable thing is it to be an Atheist, which gives men no hope beyond this present life? Yea, what a world would this be to dwell in, if there were no true godliness in it, since without this, no comfortable humane society, no kindly and right subjection to the magistrat can be expected from these, who have no tye from above, and knows not what it is to pay homage to a soveraign being. 5. Is not the native tendency of Atheisme to all ungodliness in mens practice, yea, how farr doth it debase humane nature and levells it, even with the beasts. 6. Whilst you scoff at serious Religion, I dare appeale your selves, if in your retirements, when you have any sober reflections, you are not forc'd to have other thoughts; and why is it, you so much fear to goe alone, and be in any measure serious with your soul; Oh what a desperat securitie is that?

I shall onely adde, is it not rare to finde a professed Atheist at death, when once the approach of another world does

does awake the sense of a Deitie? But then it is easie to see men, who have sported at godlines in their life, were over that wretched mirth, when it comes to death, and call for such Ministers, whom once they hated; and oh what a dreadful cure will hell be of atheisme, for there they know the truth in earnest, though it be their terrour; it is also sure the Diuel is no atheist, who beleevs there is a God and trembles.

I must yet a litle further crave libertie ere I pass this argument, to speak a word, even to these, who know and have experienced the same; O how great should this be in our eyes, and with what astonishment may we consider it. Which by so full, so satisfying a demonstration doth witness, not to the eye, or eare, but to the soul, the certainty of divine truth and the power and reality of godliness, should we not think, if but one, in an age, or that every particular Christian, were but once at some solemn time of his life thus confirmed, that he could say then did he taste and see the word, and found it surely verified on his soul, as sure as he knoweth that he lives, what a rate would he value and preserve so singular a seal and confirmation of the truth, yea, keep up the remembrance of such a special time whilst he lived? but oh, must it be said that this grave witness this clear demonstration of the Scripture, and of the certainty of the words of truth which we have by experience doth lose its weight, and the inestimable value thereof less regarded, that it is the Christians dayly bread? O what a reach hath this argument, what great things are there held forth? I think a serious look of the same, if it were brought neer to us, might put us to question, whether we beleev the same, or not; and we in a dreame or awake; and sees them with our eyes which this doth so convincingly demonstrat; whilst we can so easily pass them with so little weight thereof on our spirit; now to hold that forth, let us but bring neer this argument, and gravely consider the same with respect to some

of these great truths, which by this unanswerable demonstration of experience are witnessed: I must say, such truths that we may wonder how men can so easily admit their being true, and in so ordinary a way look thereon, without wondering and astonishment.

1. Doth not this argument of experience by a verie clear demonstration witness that great truth of a Godhead, whereon the whole superstructure of truth and godliness doth stand? yea, in another maner do's enforce on men the perswasion of this by a more neer and convincing discovery, when the gaeatest works of God, or these glorious appearances of his power and wisdom in the heavens, and earth doe; it is true, these bring him neer to our eye and ear; but O this brings the blessed and invisible God neerer, into the heart and soul, that we may both taste and see, that surely he is, and is that which in the Scripture he is declared to be; it is not the contemplation of nature in its highest might can answer such an assault of the Devil, which may tryft the most established Christian anent the being of God; but there is a demonstration within which goes further then the judgment, and passeth natural understanding, whence we feel, we taste, we enjoy, yea, his voice is heard in the soul which we surely know to be his, and this is the reach and import of this argument: There is indeed cause to wonder at the atheisme of this world, since men can look no where, without some witness of a Deity to stare them in the face; but Oh, there is a more refined atheisme that lyes in the bosome of a professed assent to divine truth, it is not easily discerned, though not the less dreadful that it goes under a cover not only from the view of others, but even from a mans self; I would here offer some things which do witness a special advantage the godly man is at thereby to believe, and to be more thoroughly perswaded of the glorious being of God. 1. That he finds the believing of this is a very great thing, and not so easy to reach as the world do suppose, for it is no small matter even to attaine this; Oh, what ordinarie thoughts have many about it, who

who thinks it easie to pass an assent to this marvelous truth because they never considered the greatnes thereof; but is sure, the more serious and grave a Christian is, it will give him the more work, and we may find these usuallie more plunged and exercised about this, then others. 2. It is a great advantage, when this is so far mens serious studie as to be upon an inquirie after a further establishment in so great a truth; O what another sight of the invisible God! What a satisfying perswasion of his blessed being might we have, if our soul were indeed herein exercised; and knew but how little we know and have reached in this, that there is a neerer approach to God, which should shew us the faintness of a Deity is something beyond these former thoughts we have had thereof, we lose many singular confirmations and this, because we doe not in earnest look after them. 3. They are at a speciall advantage to whom believing of this truth, (O blessed truth, that God is) is their exceeding joy, and amidst their heaviness can say, the thought and meditation of him is sweet, that when through a variety of temptations they are readie to faint, this restoreth their soul, yea, will cause it leap within for joy, and is their *Enough* when other encouragements are furthest off, that *God lives*: O what a thing is it in such a world, and in some deep perplexing plunge, to know the Lord is God, whom he hath now for a rock and a shield, and in the close of time for his exceeding great reward; can we have some serious thought of this, and so easily turn our selves to other things without astonishment, yea, is it not strange there should be oft so neer and immediat a bordering betwixt our thoughts of the glorious God and the meanest trifle. 4. It is no small advantage where men can open the Bible and retire into it, under the sense and impression of a Godhead, and that neer correspondence he hath this way with his people, on whose soul these words hath awe and authority. *Thus saith the Lord*, yea, have that repose upon his testimony and promise, which the solide perswasion of his being and faithfulness should cause. 5. They have come a great length here, who in their ordinary walk, are under some

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of the Scripture.

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weight and impreſſion of this that God is neer, who knows of their ſitting down and riſing up, from whoſe ſight they cannot ſhift one thought, yea, that on him they have ſuch an abſolute dependance, that without him they can not draw their breath; O where this is beleev'd muſt it not cauſe both fear and wondering?

2. Is not this an argument which by a ſure and unanſwerable demonſtration do's witneſs the truth and reality of grace, that there is ſuch a thing, and is no empty ſound, which doth raiſe man above the natural ſtate of men, as far as reaſon puts him above the ſtate of the beaſt, it is truly ſtrange this ſhould be believed and, yet is not more marvelous in our eyes, how we can be at ſuch reſt whiſt one of theſe two lyes under debate, the reality of grace or our being really intereſſed therein; O is there not cauſe of aſtoniſhment that ſuch a product of heaven ſhould be found in the earth, whoſe deſcent and original is ſo clearly demonſtrated by its breathing upwards after God, its native tendency and motion towards him, whence it came? Surely grace is a great ſubject to think on, and that it is not ſo in our eyes, it muſt be either we do not believe it, or do not conſider what a change it makes on the ſoul, which is no tranſient diſpoſition, but the ſeed of God that remains, is not this ſuch a thing as makes ſpring in the winter, cauſeth men grow under their greateſt weights? that liſts the ſoul up from the clay, yea does by bringing it low in its own eyes, raiſe it neerer God, this makes a man to have another appearance, on which the world is forc't to look with ſome aſtoniſhment, one Chriſtian doth admire this in another, & the more it ſhews it ſelfe, it cauſeth a more neer approach betwixt their ſouls; it will cauſe fear in them who hate it; and hath a power even over its perſecuters; now it is the truth and reality of this excellent thing, that this argument do's witneſs; yea ſuch a witneſs that can admit no debate, where experience makes it ſure: I confeſs a ſerious look & perſwaſion of this might make the Chriſtians life a continued wonder, that there is ſuch a thing, which by a marvelous ſurpriſal did prevent him when he was not aware, hath

hath entred him into a new world, & translated him from a state of darknes unto a marvelous light; causeth the soul breath in another air, brings him so neer that state of the angels, subdues the will without violence, & subjects it with its own consent; yea, by so strait a ty is link't with an eternal glory in blessedness; Surely this is one of the most stately pieces of the work of God, that exceeds the whole structure of the universe; O with what astonishment should we look on this marvelous thing, if we could consider the whole frame and structure of the grace of God in a Christian, and there make as it were a dissection in its several parts and proportions, its decay and languishing, these different changes and lifes, its vigorous actings and abatements thereof, how it breaths, is nourished, how it keep'd green and preserved by a continued intercourse with the fountain of its being: & lo, whilst we consider this great wonder, both in the whole and in its parts, we may see how in these it do's most exactly answer that model we have thereof in the scripture of God.

3. This is a great argument, and should be so in our eyes, which do's not only witness the reality of grace in its acting and exercise, which in this former section is specially pointed at; but do's unanswerably demonstrat a *spiritual life* and being, which the Christian knows and is persuaded thereof, as he is sure he breaths and hath a natural life. O what a marvelous demonstration is this, wherein sense and feeling doth in as certain a way concur, as in any discoverie we have by our outward senses, that there is a new life and another being besides that we have by nature, which answers to a new birth; yea, an other breathing and acting that is also sured thereto; but oh, can it be said we believe and know it is assuredly true, who have such common and passing thoughts thereof, and do's not consider what it is whereof we are sure. 1. That this is so great a thing, it may indeed cause wonder to think we are men, and that we have a rational being, but O a spiritual life is another cause for wondering, which comes not by our birth, hath no natural causes, yet a life that hath its proper

operation, and vital acts put forth, as truly as these natural actions of breathing and moving are put forth by a living man: O life that hath in as sensible a way quickening and refreshing influences, as the earth or bodies of men, knows the influences of the heavens; which hath a pleasure and delight peculiar to its nature, that hath no affinity with things we enjoy by the senses, but is a pleasure do's far exceed the same, and is this a small matter to be perswaded? 2. What a demonstration is it which doth witness even to our sense and feeling a power on the soul by the word, above the most perswasive words of man, and above all moral influences, by which men are not only reached, but transform'd into the same image, whence the Christian know's, and know's assuredly, these great truths the sealing, witnessing, teaching, comforting of the Spirit, &c: are no matter of words, or some strange devised names, but are undoubted realities acted and verified on the soul. 3. If this demonstration of a spiritual life be sure, have we not thus also, an eternal life and being with God put beyond debate for, if we be certain of the one, O is not this undeniable that this noble being of the new creature, this life that is here begun, must have a more full growth and be at the furthest stature of the man in Christ, when we now see it with our eyes in its infancy, and upon a growing advance towards the same, for the one is surely as demonstrative of the other, as a young childe which we see in a growing tendencie towards a man, doth shew there is a man in his furthest growth. 4. If we assuredly know this Spirituall life, must we not also admit the undoubted truth of spirituall beings, and of an invisible world, with which this life hath its correspondence, yea thus as by a streame be led up to the true fountain to know an invisible God.

4. How great an argument is this, which gives us such a demonstration that heaven is not altogether deferred until we be there, but that such a thing is sure, as the reall presence of the glorious God, and a neer familiar approach of him to the soul, which is here as really felt and enjoyed,

as we can be sure of any, thing; O how marvelous should this be to us! I cannot doubt but the report hereof do's sometime daze the world with amazement, and puts the grossest of men to strange thoughts; But oh, may not this cause them question its reality whether these who bears such a witness, do truly feel and enjoy the same; who by their way and appearance do's so little declare any deep impression, that this hath on them; I have sometimes thought strange how men are taken, even in a kinde of transport with the discoverie of some rare experiment and demonstration in nature, which could make that poor man cry out *ευρηκα* as though therewith he had gained the whole earth: but O here is another kinde of demonstration, of a more transcendent value and interest! to know and be sure of this neer approach and intercourse betwixt God and the soul; that even with men in the earth he will verily dwell, and have so reall a converse; this do's indeed rise above Archimedes reach, and such who ever follow'd the search of nature in their most exact and subtile inquiry; O blessed souls who have found it! for they have found a treasure; the thoughts whereof may make it a new thing every day, and make them consider this with a renewed wondering, to know, there is not only a clame and tittle to the inheritance above, but that the first fruits and earnest thereof is got here; that as surely as there is a real and immediat converse betwixt men, they have found such a neer immediat fellowship with God, that all the words of the world cannot expresse; such a meeting betwixt him and them, where their soul hath been drawn out with desire, where they have found a breaking up of the day with an astonishing brightness, after a most cloudy and dark night; O is not this a great thing! have they not cause both for joy and wondering who have fallen on such an experiment that they can say, and not from report, I do surely feel, I enjoy, I am perswaded this is the Lord, and thus have come forth from him with such a change on their soul, and composure of minde, that even by-standers might see where they have been; now this is the Christians witness, which all who are

are serious in the way of the Lord can in some measure bear, that in a way no less sure and demonstrative then any thing here beneath can be known, they have had such a discovery, and now these strange Scripture truths, the meaning whereof once they could not know, such as, their soul melting within at the voice of their beloved, to have his name as ointment powred forth, and be brought neer to see his face with joy, they know well that they are as truly verified on the heart, as they are written before their eyes in the word; I shall but adde, it is a verie great thing these know, who know's assuredly the real presence of God here; for thus they are made sure that he is, as one may know the sun, because of its warming heat, and when they see it with its own light, thus they are confirmed of the truth of the Scripture, whilst they see and feel one of the most marvelous things therein verified.

5. This is an *argument* do's clearly witness a truth and reality in *prayer*, which may be called one of the great wonders of Religion, that such a way is, wherein there is so neer so immediat an address to the Majesty of God in all our concernments, is not this a very great thing that poor man, now upon the earth, hath such a passage to heaven; & may speak up unto him who inhabits eternity, the glorious object of the adoration of angels, without the intervening of any creature; yea, with so sure a warrant may approach the throne of God, & there poure out his soul; & present his requests unto him who lives and sees: O with what astonishment should we consider this! Suppose at some solempne times in our life this only might be attain'd, yea, that it were but in one part of the earth should we not look on the whole earth besides as accursed; and reckon an abode there, were it a barren desert & wilderness, to be preferable to all other advantages: it may truly be a question whilst we are most in the practice of this duty, if we believe the truth & reality thereof; but it is beyond question what Christians have most sensibly found here, that they can say, if they be sure they have a soul, they have been as sure in this blessed way, they have had their soul

restored and return'd again, and under some *deliquium*; that by wrestling they have at last prevail'd, yea have got an answer from heaven, as if they had got it by an audible voice: now is not this a great and marvelous demonstration?

But oh what common thoughts have we thereof, and may not these things seem strange, if seriously considered.

1. That we are not more restless to be surely perswaded this is a truth when we are so highly concerned therein, that we may have further confirmations ament this, which we should look on as an inestimable treasure, both for our joy and establishment.

2. It is strange we can find it so easie a matter to pray and appear before God, that we are not afray'd to be hastie in uttering a matter before him, whilst we consider God is in heaven, and we are but on the earth; it is sure, if we intend the bringing of our soul with us in such a duty, it should be more our studie to watch unto prayer throughout our walk.

3. It may seem strange how easily we can step out from the world, and the noise thereof, in before the Lord, without the least pause or time interveening, which the impression of so great a buslines should require; yea, so immediatly in our return again step into the world, as if we had wholly forgot where we have been.

4. How strange is formality in such a buslines as prayer which is an address to the living God, one of the most solempne acts of the soul; yea, we may call it the most natural work of a Christian, like the breathing of the child after the breasts; Alace its sad, that this seems rather a piece of invention many times, then a matter of earnest with the Lord, not so much the breathing of the soul in desire after him, as the expressing what should be our desires: O to what a class can such a piece of Atheisme be reduced, as appears in our neereft approaches to God?

5. Should we look on prayer as a dutie and not consider it as a singular enjoyment also, without which this earth would have a neer appearance of hell, if we could not thus solace the soul in God, and get a vent under its greatest pressures; O prayer! What thoughts should

should we have of it, if the truth thereof were more believed; I think that man who is sure of the being & faithfulness of God, and of the reality of prayer needs not be solicitous with what face the World look on him; when thus his great interest and encouragement is secure, and a well is at his hand, that can answer all his complaints.

6. Have we not this demonstration also by that *Argument* of experience, how neer the blessed Majestie of God do's in the way of providence approach to his people, and is surely known by a real correspondence he hath with them in this way, in which he do's so clearly verifie his word, holds forth light and counsel, gives the return of prayer, sometimes with such remarkable circumstances, as causeth fear as well as joy and will force that testimony, *this is verily the Lord*; It is true, that in the smallest things he is great, and thus declares himself to be God; but there is a more solemn and neer approach, by some special steps of his providence: yea, by the rod he doth sometimes speak, as with an audible voice, and with such a convoy of his power opens the ear of men and seals their instruction, as will force its passage down to the reins and in the hidden part cause them to understand wisdom; there is sometime also so wonderfull a tract and series of providences, and these so convincing that men cannot but see something greater then man therein, whilst things have been trysted with such a surprisal, in the verie opportune time and season that their *mercie*, though great in it self, hath not so much taken them up as the way how it is brought about, and their discoverie of the immediate hand of God therein, and the truth of his word, and promise.

7. I must further adde, O! is not this a great Argument which perswads the soul of these truths by so sure a way as *experience*, that thus we have an inward, and sensible demonstration of the things of God, that are as certainly witnessed, as these visible Heavens & Earth are to our eyes, when they are most fixed thereon: O what is this which the Christian know's yet know's so little what he

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hath thereby; this is indeed a fight which puts the thing seen beyond question or debates, for the soul hath its feeling and taste as sure as the body, & hath a savour and relish of things suitable to its own nature, whereby it can discern a peculiar sweetnes and fragrancie in that which may seem bitter, and grievous to the flesh. It is by this fight which experience gives, the Christian is a witness himself, is therein personally concern'd, do's see these great things with his owne eyes and not with the eyes of others; the consolations of God which are not small, are no matter of report to him; he know's how no mercie hath been more sweet and relishing as that which hath had a bitter cross going before; yea never more sensibly found his own burden, then he had found it taken off, the laying on whereof was not so grievous as that reliefe, and ease hath been sweet upon its removal.

Now to shut up this *Argument*, I shall but adde the testimonie of two great and eminent witnesses to the truth, who after they had been helped to serve their generation by the will of God, and were dying, had that large account to give from their experience of the truth and faithfulness of God in his word, and leave such a seal to the same worthie to be transmitted to posteritie; the one is that great Servant of Christ *Beza*, who in his younger years, after the Lord had touched his heart by the word, was one day in the Church of *Charenton*, trysted with that 91. Psalm, which then was expounded, and with such power was followed, that not only he found it marvellously sweet to him at present, but was then helped to believe, yea to a great perswasion of the Lords making out all these promises to him in his perswasion, which as he after found verified did at his death with much comfort witness the same, that as he had been then helped to close with that great truth in the second Vers, in taking the Lord for his God, and got a sure claime thereto, yea that he should be his refuge and fortresse, he hade found him that most remarkably in the after changes of his life, that he had delivered him from the snare of the fowler, and the noysome pestilence, ha-

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ving been in frequent hazard by the lying in wait of many to ensnare him, and sometimes was in great hazard from the pestilence in these places where he was called to reside; yea amidst the civil wars which were then so hote in France, had most convincing deliverances from many imminent hazards, when he was called to be present sometimes with the Protestant Princes upon the fields, where thousands did fall about him; and thus whilst near his death, he found that Psalm so observably verified whereon he was caused to hope, that he went through all these promises, declaring the comfortable accomplishment thereof, and how he had found the Lords giving his Angels charge over him, had oft answered him when he had called on him, had been with him in trouble, delivered him; yea had satisfied him with a long life, and now sayes he I have no more to wait for but the fulfilling of that last word of the Psalm to shew him his salvation, for which in confidence he longed. This though not writ by these who have given an account of his life in our language; yet I had the same from these most worthie of credit, who not only from some of the greatest French Protestants had it when they were in France, as a known and sure passage, but told me they read the same there in a printed relation in that language, anent his life and death.

The 2. testimony I shall here offer is from a grave & eminent minister of Christ in our own Church within these few years, Mr. George Gillespie, who near his death did declare to these who were by, what a large proof he had, and assured perswasion of the truth of the Scripture from experience; that he knew so well what adventuring on the word was, and what it was to live on divine assistance, and be thus in all his concernments carried through, that he could not desire, were he to live in the world, a more desireable and satisfying life, then that of a continued relyance and depending on the Lord; and trulie amongst many notable experiments that may of God had thereof, this was one very convincing, how in a strange land, whither he was called on the service of the Church, and in a grave assembly of many of the greatest divins in that age, when one day

he was surprised with an unexpected rencontre of a learned Man Mr. *Selden*, who came on designe with some others of that partie, upon the *Erastian* interest to debate for it, by the strongest arguments which they had then premeditated for it defence; whilst none appeared in that great assembly to give a return, though there were many singularly learned & able, he did on an immediat relyance on God adventure, (lest the adversary should take advantage thereat) and gave a short accompt of these arguments adduced, wherein the strength of his discours did most ly, with so clear and satisfying an answer as astonished all, yea did silence the adversary with a marvellous conviction; now this was the more convincing that having a little paper book in his hand, in which he was before observed to writ down something, he was by some after pressed to let them see his notes, supposing the heads of his following discours were in it, but found only in some Pages these words several times writt down, *Light O Lord, and assistance*, his soul being then carried upward for the same; thus did that blessed man give in his witnes to the truth when he was dying, from the sure experience he had thereof, through his life; and with much assurance of the salvation of God died, which I must say is a remark, that in many instances might be obvious, how great peace and an abundant entrance, these have found in the close of the day, who have been helped to most faithfulness in the publick interests of Christ, and his Church, and to the most severe adherence to their light, anent the duties of the time; which I knew in an other worthie Minister of Christ, not many years since, who by some of his last words did witness an unexpressible joy he found in this, that the Lord had kepted him in a time of many trials from giving his Ark a wrong touch, which he then declared to bystanders, when he was on the very threshold betwixt this, and an other World.

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SECOND ARGUMENT.

SECOND Argument to demonstrat the accomplishment of the Scripture is this, that not only Christian experience, but the observation of the Church and people of God, doth in all ages bear witness thereto, how the Lords way in these providences both of mercy, and judgement, about the Church, amidst the various changes of her condition, yea, in the most strange things which fall out in the world, doth convincingly answer the word, and verify the same.

IT is indeed undeniable that the Scripture of God, as it is written to the personal case of his people, and doth in their experience take place, so is there a part of it in a peculiar way directed to the Church, the fulfilling whereof in the providences, and events of the time should be the subject of our observation, and would singularly help to confirm our faith of the truth thereof.

For prosecuting this argument I would touch it a little in these three branches.

1. How these generall promises which belong to the Church universal, and concern her in all ages, have an accomplishment.

2. How these threatnings also of the word which do not onely concern the Church, but have a respect to her adversaries are certainly fulfilled, and take place in mens observation, who do observe the judgements of their time.

3. How the Scripture of God doth clearly shine upon the darkest footsteps of providence, even these which would seem most strange and hard to understand, so that it may be demonstrat nothing falleth out in the world, or befalleth the saints, but what is most consonant to the Scripture.

FIRST BRANCH. As to the first branch of this argument, I shall but instance five general promises, which we finde held forth in the word concerning the Church,

and endeavour to shew how very clear, and obvious the accomplishment of them is, if men do not willingly shut their own eyes.

FIRST Promise wherein we find the Scripture expresse, is the *preservation of the Church* that he will be with her to the end of the World, and though he make an end of other nations, yet, will he not make an utter end of her, but while the ordinances of the sun, and the moon doe last, and as the dayes of heaven so shall her dayes be prolonged, against her the gates of hell shall not prevail. *Jer. 30: ver. 11. Math. 16: 18.* Now that God hath truly verified this his promise and is as good as his word, is a truth though manifest, yet, so very clear, and manifest, that I am sure no atheist can deny, it may be so easily demonstrat.

First, that the Church doth continue, and is kept alive to this day, it doth certainly prove the truth of his promise, for it can be said of her, and none can say it is a lie, she hath outlived all her opposers, the greatest of whom have found their grave in the quarrel, over whose tomb that last confession of a great adversary *Julian* may be written *viciisti tandem Galilee*, hath not this deadly, and irreconcilable feed been perpetuat from fathers to children, but who hath prospered in that enterprize, the archers have oft shot, and wounded her sore, but her bow doth abide in strength, as at this day, this is her motto, *persecuted but not forsaken, cast down, but not discouraged*, she who hath brought many children, yet ceaseth not to bear, whose age hath not marred her beauty, her eyes are not dimmed, nor her strength failed, a sight which may cause us no lesse stand, and consider this great wonder, then *Moses* did at that which was but the shadow, and embleme thereof, a bush burning and not consumed, for behold a Church kept alive, yet, still in the flames, and when to appearance consumed, it doth arise more glorious out of her own ashes, this is indeed the only *Phoenix*, and we know no other, of whom that can be said, hath she not born out these universal deluges, which did like an inundation go over her head,

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idolatry, and paganisme in the first times, and Antichristianism with Arrianism in the after ages, yet not swallowed up, which may be no lesse marvellous then when she was kept above the waters in the ark, and though her enemies have oft sung her funeral song, and rejoyced over the dead bodies of her witnesses, yet, they have risen again, her bones have taken life, and come together, and behold she is alive at this day.

2. Not onely the Churches preservation, but the continued series, and succession thereof unto this time doth witness the fulfilling of this promise, that in the darkest times, of her condition, she hath not altogether disappeared, even, when she was so long hid in the wilderness, but still in every age had some witnesses, and though the Church hath oft cryed out for the want of Children, and been heard weeping, bemoaning her self because they were not, yet, we may say she never wanted an offspring to this day, she did never dye without an heir, and seed of her own, to raise up her name, even since the Covenant was first made with her in Adams family, and though particular Churches have their set times which like the sun, have the usual periods, their height, and flourishing, and afterwards a gradual decay, making way to the departure of light, yet, this made never void the promise of God to the Church universal, whose lamp was never put out, nay, shall not while the dayes of heaven doe last.

2. We must also say that the continuance, and preservation of the Church is peculiar to her alone, and can be said of no other interest and party beneath the sun, for it is clear that there was no Kingdome, or Empire so firmly rooted, no society so well governed by Lawes, backed with power, which hath had the best title, and claim, but time at last did prevail over it, and made the same a trophee of her conquest; yea, the greatest Monarchies, and flourishing Cities have at last yeelded, so as of them it may be said, *nunc seges est ubi Troia fuit*, but time cannot to this day boast of a triumph over the Church of God, though no nation, no family in the earth could ever plead antiquity with

with her: This is that interest, which hath born out these great revolutions that so oft changed the very face of the world, yea, hath outlived so many Kingdomes, and successions thereof.

4. It doth convincingly demonstrat the truth of the promise of the Churches preservation, that the World yea greatest Atheistes may see, this hath not come to passe at an adventure, nay, not in an ordinary way of providence, but by a divine power, most discernable therein; while it is so clear. 1. That no interest, or party had ever such adversaries, as the Church, against whom the powers of World, and the powers of darknes have always been on foot. 2. That outward advantages have usually been on her adversaries side, not only the great men of the earth, but these of greatest parts; & abilities. That their will was never wanting on their power & that they designe no lesse then to raze her to the foundation. 4. That this enimity hath been rooted, & irreconcilable, while time to this day could never take up. 5. That no interest did ever endure such violent assaults, so many sharp barrages, for it is observable that most of the wars, and commotions of every age, have been some way stated on the Churches account, and what ever privat quarrels men have had among themselves, yet it hath not hindred the pursuit of their malice against the woman, and her seed. 6. That such who have come out of her bowels, even the men of her own house, have oft been her greatest enemies, and lyen in wait to take her at an advantage in the day of halting. 7. That her real friends have oft fainted in a time of her strait, and stood afar off, yea, almost none of the Children, which she had brought forth have been the found to take her by the hand; 8. That the depths of Satan, in her enemies, as an angel of light have sometimes given her a sore assault, so that if it had been possible, an ordinary midles could have reacht their end, they should have deceived the very elect. 9. I must adde this further witnes to the marvellous preservation of the Church, which in an ordinary way could not come to passe, that we find no

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other party was ever brought so low and near death, to
 yet alive, the knife was once at the Churches throat
Isaak, she did seek to adopt a bound-womans sonne in
 head of a lawful heir, when *Abraham* agreed to *Sara's*
 overture for the outmaking of the promise; how near ex-
 tinguishing doe we finde her in Egypt, when a sentence to de-
 stroy all her male issue was gone forth? Yea, what but a
 miracle could have perserved her, when she was betwixt
Pharaoh, and the red sea? How low was the Church in
 the wilderness, and after in the dayes of the captivity, even
 broken to pieces with small appearance of life, when her
 face was all blurred with weeping, and her enemies made
 sport over her ruines at the rivers of Babylon, when the
 Children of Edom cryed out let us raze her even to the
 foundation? Yea, could the Church be nearer the grave,
 when when her bones were scattered at the graves mouth,
 but above all in that dark night when her head and shep-
 herd was smitten, and her hope seemed to be buried in the
 grave with a stone put upon it, when she could get no enter-
 tainment among the Jewes, was wounded in the house of
 her friends, and the Gentils in wrath rose up against her,
 that for some hundred yeares the great Empire which had
 trod down all the nations about, put forth the outmost of
 power and malice for her undoing, O who could have
 thought the Church should outlive this? Yea, after
 we finde her tost, and hurried by Antichrist into the
 wilderness, an adversary more cruel then any that had gone
 before, where the Dragon watcht to get her destroyed,
 how in all these, and through that long dark night she
 hath continued and marvellously flourished, as the palm
 tree, under greatest weights; so that we cannot but see
 that which her enemies being judges will not deny, that
 this promise to the Church of her preservation is this
 day fulfilled, yea, that it hath not in an ordinary way been
 brought about; surely there is no enchantment against
Isaac, nor divination against *Israel*, all her enemies have
 been found liars, happy art thou above other People, for
 the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are ever-
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lasting armes, else long since she should have been swallowed up; may we not still say with astonishment, what hath God wrought in her behalfe.

SECOND promise; which I shall here instance, that God had made to his Church in the Word, *Of her increase and enlargement*; that the Earth should be covered with the knowledge of God, as the sea of water, and her sea be as the stars of Heaven, that her bounds should be from the sea to the utmost rivers, which was promised to Christ in the behalfe of his Church and that she should possess the gates of her enemies. *Psal. 89:v. 25. Psal. 2:v. 8. Isa. 40:v. 4. Isa. 54:v. 3.*

As this promise is expresse in the Scripture, we must see it is no lesse clear, and evident in its accomplishment, that surely the Lord hath kept his Word, whereto the event doth most exactly answer, and though yet it be not to the full made out, I am sure there is so much at this day manifested, considering the former condition of the Church, undenyably proveth the fulfilling of the forementioned promise which even to the conviction of greatest Atheists may be demonstrat from these grounds.

1. That vast extent which the Kingdome of Christ hath had in the World, for this cannot be denyed, that the greatest Empire, or Monarchy could never so far extend the conquest, as the Church hath done, since the wall of partition was taken down; short are the limits of the Grecian and Roman Empire considered with this, whose bounds have been the ends and uttermost parts of the Earth, where neither Greece or Rome did ever set up their Trophies, hath not the Gospel as the sun made its circuit from the East to the West? yea crossed the seas, to the dark northern nations, thus fulfilling its course, in order to its turn again to the place of its first rising, that it may, as we are sure it shall once, visit the Jewes again, and the eastern places of the World that now are buried in a night of darknes, which I think will be as sure a preface of the break of day, as

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second coming of the Lord, as the morning Star is to the World of the Suns accomplishing its course, and that it is returning again to the East where it should rise; hath not the Gospel now been through Asia where it did not tarry for a night, for many flowrishing Churches were there, and the going back of the tyde from thence was its flowing to another part of the World, which is indeed observable of the Church, as it is of the sea, that what it hath losed in one part, it hath gained in another; did the vast distance of Africk, its great barren deserts, or scorching heat hinder the Gospels making a visit thither, so as it was once a fertil soyle, and brought forth many famous lights, yea, something yet doth both there, and in the East parts of the World remain, to shew the Gospel was truly in these places; and hath Europe though last, been least on this account? Yea, what do mean the late discoveries of unknown parts of the Earth, but to make way for a more full performance of this promise, that the Gospel might stretch its conquest over the line, which surely was the gold and treasure Christ designd from thence that even America might have her day also, and the voice of there turtle be heard in these lands.

2. Not only the large extent of the Church as to its bounds doth witnes this, but also the great, and numerous offspring of Sons and Daughters which in these parts where the Gospel hath been were brought forth to Christ, for we may say, what John saw in vision hath been very manifest to after ages, an innumerable company of all Tongues, Nations and Languages, of whom it could be said these are born in Zion, O how great a harvest of the Nations, is even already gathered? What a fleece hath every particular Church cast? What a marvellous increase hath been in some places after special tydes of the Gospel? May we not say that truth is now beyond debate, that out of one, and him not onely as good as dead, but truly dead there hath come forth as the sand of the sea and Stars of Heaven in number, the Church hath inherited Josephs blessing of the

the womb, & the breasts in a fruitful offspring, the dew of Christs youth hath been as the womb of the morning. O what a marvellous and goodly company will this once be when gathered together? Then will the performance of these precious promises be fully manifested.

3. This truth may be demonstrat not onely from the reall conquest of the Gospel, and these excellent trophies of her victory over many noted enemies, who have after been vessels of honour, but also from the feigned subjection that so many have been made to render, is it not strange, what a multitude doth in these times professe the truth, and yet hate it, and were never drawn with the cords of love? How very many have courted the name of a Christian, and wooed the shadow of religion, who never knew the truth thereof, which certainly is a convincing evidence of the Gospels conquest that so many knees should bow to the name of Jesus, whose hearts were never bowed, or really subdued to him.

4. It is an unanswerable proof of this truth that we see the Churches increase, and enlargement hath come to passe most punctually after that manner, yea, with all the circumstances as was foretold and promised, so that the event doth in every thing answer the word, for, First it is there held out, that from a day of small things which men would be ready to dispise, it should grow up as a tender plant, and spread forth its branches over the nations, that the children of the desolat should be moe then of the married Wife, and the glory of the second Temple, exceed that of the first, & O! hath it not accordingly come to passe?

2. This great increase, and enlargement of the Church was to fall out in the dayes of the new Testament, when Christ should be lifted up, that then he should draw all men after him; for these promises we have thereof in the old testament, doe clearly point at the times of the Gospel, and doth not the event here accordingly answer? 3. The Scripture holdeth out that the falling away of the Jewes should be the riches of the Gentils, and that their rejection should make way for the fulfilling of this promise even the

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4. We finde the isles, and outmost parts of the earth are given to Christ for his Inheritance, and foretold as a special part of the Churches increase, and do we not clearly see there is no place of the world, where Christ's Kingdome is more visible; where moe children have been begot to him by the gospel, we may say, then in these northern places; even in these isles of Britain, and Ireland, which are almost the uttermost parts of the earth, there being but little from that airth, and nearer the pole which is inhabited, yea we may iudge hath been that *Thule* whereof the Ancients did so much speak. 5. Was it not also foretold that the Church should possesse the gates of her enemies, at whose great increase the world should wonder, the princes thereof see, and be troubled while God is known in her palaces for a refuge, and doth not the event witnes this, that over all the counsels, and essayes which the world hath had to hinder the churches growth, her rising hath alwayes been upon the ruines of her greatest enemies; yea, these who have been a terrour in the land of the living did oft fall, & break themselves in that attempt, can men deny the marvellous progresse of the Church how from a small beginning she at last possessed the gates of both the east, and western Empire her old enemies, & do we not this day see her conquest advancing on the ruines of Antichrist, her last & greatest adversary.

5. As the fulfilling of this promise anent the Churches increase is undeniable, since men cannot contradict their sense therein, we must also say this is a thing great, and marvellous, which no lesse then some divine, and extraordinary power could bring about, if we consider these things, first, that quick dispatch which the churches growth, under the dayes of the new Testament hath made. O might not the pagan world wonder how in the space of two or three hundred years it was almost become wholly Christian; O strange! a *Dioclesian*, & *Maximus* so grievously persecuting, and trampling on the very name of Christianity, & yet near

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that same age, this great Roman Empire, and Emperour submitting to the Gospel which was fulfilled in the dayes of Constantine. 2. How astonishing was it for the Churches rise, and increase to be brought about upon the ruine, and downfal of the idols of the nations, who had their temples, and were worshipped as God, that the world should be made to renounce its Bible, and that religion which for so many ages was deeply rooted by tradition from their fathers; these altars which were had in such reverence, demolished, and their temples made a ruinous heap, yea, the very name of their Gods should be thus obliterated, was not this indeed very wonderful? but Dagon hath no strength to stand before the ark of the God of Israel. 3. That it should be thus advanced by such a mean as the preaching of the word, even of that which to the Jewes was a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishnes, how this voice should put to perpetual silence these Oracles that for so many ages had given a response to the world might be indeed astonishing, yea, that the Churches increase should thus be brought about, at no lesse rate, then the overturning of great Kingdomes, the conversion of so many nations, should tame, and civilize the most savage, and barbarous, cause the lion to ly down with the lamb, and even make so great and universal a change in the face of the universe. 4. Doth it not speak forth some divine power the carrying on of the Churches growth, and increase not only over the violence of men, but over all these dreadful errours, and inventions, these thick mists which both in former, and late times, have ascended out of the pit to choke her, that we may say, the Church hath not only been helped to tread upon the lion, & dragon, but on the adder, & cockatrice also; & doth carry the trophees of her conquest over all these at this day. 5. I would adde, is it not marvellous how the Churches increase hath been advanced in a way most contrary to all the rules of ordinary policy, by which States, and Empires have risen, not by dissimulation, but greatest plainnes, and free dealing for Christ, and his Ministers did never flatter the world to embrace the truth; not by

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open violence, but a more excellent spirit, and power before which men could not stand, where foolishness was made to confound, and outwit humane wisdom, and weakness to overcome strength, that we may say, Oh how little of man and much of God was to be seen therein.

THIRD Promise which the Lord hath given to his Church in the word, is the giving of the Spirit and pouring out of the same, which is there expressly held forth, and promised, *Zach. 12: 10. Joh. 14: 17. Isa. 59: 21.* And doth concern all times of the Church, though in a more full measure, to be let out in the dayes of the Gospel.

It is true the Christians inward experience can best witness this, for these have an argument from within; they know, and they are sure they have received the Spirit by the word, whereby they understand these things which are spiritually discerned, but that which here is intended, it is to shew, that the Spirit is truly let forth to the Church according to the promise, that it doth accompany the truth, and doctrine of Christ, and purity of the ordinances, as a thing which from clear undeniable evidences may be demonstrated to the conviction of the greatest Atheist: for I must think even bystanders, such who never knew any saving work of the Spirit, but live in these parts where the ordinances are dispensed with purity, and power, if they shut not their eyes, may oft clearly see something going forth with the word, that is beyond words, a divine Spirit, and power which sendeth forth its savour in the dayly administration of the Gospel, yea, by its effects, and some convincing discovery thereof, doth force this truth in upon mens consciences, who are other wayes strangers thereto.

Now to hold forth the accomplishment of so great a promise that God is faithful, and true therein, I would give in these clear, and convincing witnesses of the same.

1. These excellent gifts, and enduements given to the Church,

Church, are they not a visible proof of this truth? For it is undeniable, where once the Gospel cometh that instruments are raised with another spirit, reapers sent forth, while there is a harvest to be gathered, and shaped for their work, yea, these who were of mean, and ordinary parts when called forth to the service of the Church, will have another lustre, that it may be oft seen with astonishment, how far not only they exceed themselves but these who were of more eminent natural enduments, I would but seriously ask men who never laid this truth to heart whence is that variety of Gifts, so suitably dispensed to the various employments, and different pieces of service, the Church doth call for? How are they thus suted to the several times, yea, to the very genius, and temper of such a time? Whence is it, that every gift, and qualification is so fitted and disposed for its proper use, some most peculiarly shaped out to awake, and threaten, these *Bearers*, while others are set forth with a spirit eminently fitted to comfort; some mighty in perswasion, yet not so fit to expound; others most dexterous to instruct, yet, not so powerful to apply; some the gift of tongues, and others the tongue of the learned to speak a word in season to the weary; to some the face of a lion is given, when a heroick spirit of courage, and resolution is called for, to others the face of a calf for patient enduring in suffering times, surely it were a choice meditation to think how with as great wonder, we may say of this excellent body of the Church, as of the natural body of man, how curious, yea, marvellously is it framed, where every part doth answer another, and to the use of the whole, each hath its peculiar excellency, and something proper to every ones gift may be then seen, as well as in the face of man, by which in somethings they differ from all other.

2. These more eminent extraordinary outlettings of the Spirit do also witnes this truth, which at some special times when the Churches necessity requireth it hath been most discernable, when the Lord sendeth forth his servants about a more then ordinary piece of work, either to doe, or suffer; when

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when he is to plant the Church in some place, where the Gospel will meet with much opposition, is it not then manifest how some more then ordinary power, and irresistible efficacy doth accompany the truth, before which there is no standing, the disputer is then in his reasoning confounded by something above reason; the untoward, and rude are forced to stoop before the word and to confesse they have to doe with power, and not with words; yea, these whom the Lord maketh use of, who were feeble and weak as others, in that day are made as a brazen wall, and defended city.

3. Is it not also undenyable that now under the New Testament there are Ministers of the Spirit, and not of a dead letter and empty sound? That with the word, there goe along a ministration of power, and life, whence a Majesty, and authority attending the publik ordinances is so discernable, that even these who know not what the Spirit is are made to see something therein which doth dazzle them with astonishment; whence is it that at sometimes such a beauty, and power shineth forth with ordinances like a glance of the glory of God, even going before mens eyes, which for the present hath made a wonderful change upon some very grosse men and put them in an other temper, yea, forced them with fear to acknowledge that surely God is near in the assemblies of his people, and I would ask whence is it, the word giveth law to mens consciences? should speak with such an authority, as maketh them all to shiver, that even the worst of men are sometime made to stand before the ministry of the word, like men standing at the barr upon life, and death, before a judge whose authority they durst not decline.

4. It is very discernable what a great difference &c an other appearance, there is both on Ministers, and Christians at one time, from what they are at an other, in the discharge of duty, as if these were not the same persons; which appeareth not onely in the enlargement, and straitning of their gift, but also in power and life; is it not seen, with what liberty these doe sometimes pray, are

as a ship with a full gale before the wind, that it is then easy to preach, when at other times there is like a shut door, that even onlookers may perceive a sensible languishing & them hampered in their very expressions, yea, as men rowing against a contrary wind, the word wanting that savour and relish it hath had at other times, & this not through a natural indisposition, or want of preparation, but that which all who ever served God in the spirit must confesse, hath most sensibly trysted them when they have thought themselves at the greatest advantage, for going about duety: O who can deny this evidence of the spirit, a thing in all ages so sensibly felt, yea, even obvious to the worst of men.

5. It is also clear that where ever the Lord hath had a Church at some special turnes of her condition there have usually been some more solemn times of the spirit and high spring tydes of the gospel, there was indeed a marvellous flowing forth of the spirit of God after Christs ascension, which like a mighty current did carry all before it, at which time more successe did follow one sermon, then hath been by the ministry of many others in an age; this made the world wonder, as if some universal enchantment had fallen on men; what that could be, which the more they sought to bear down, the more it increased, that made the rich choose poverty, and these who dwelt in palaces, take themselves with chearfulness to the dens and caves of the earth; but besides this, it is very manifest that in a large measure the Spirit hath been let forth to the Church in after ages, yea, there is no particular Church where the light hath shined but hath had it's special times, some solemn day of the pouring out of the spirit, before the sun went down; which may be observed either at the first breaking up of the Gospel, or at some other remarkable time, & change of her condition; whence a great tack of souls to Christ hath followed, besides the reaching of the conscience, and stirring the affection of many others under a common work of the spirit, which usually goeth along with solemn times.

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6. The going back of the tide, and visible withdrawing of the Spirit from particular churches, where it hath sometime, in a large measure, been let forth, is a very convincing witness to the truth of this promise; for it is clearly seen at what a stand the Gospel is in these places where it most eminently shined; that the land which blossomed and was like a watered garden, hath been made as the heath in the wilderness, and then that the ministers of Christ, whose lot hath fallen in such a time are put to very sore work, to worke, as it were, with oares for want of winde, to cast out the net all night, and catch nothing; a shut doore is upon them in the exercise of their Ministry, duty is made burdensome because the Lord is against them, there is an evident restraint upon the word, and its intercourse is more with the ear, then with the consciences of men, yea, any liberty they find is to execute a commission of judgement, and to denounce the wo of the Gospel. O, doth not so manifest withdrawing of the Spirit witness the out-letting thereof, and that it is a certain and real thing.

7. Doe not the stirrings, and strange convictions which even the worst of men have sometimes under the word, witness a divine Spirit, and power going along therewith, that which forceth an assent from their conscience to the truth, which otherwayes they hate, yea, maketh them for the time, wonder they should not have been more serious in the wayes of God, yea it doth often put a thorn in the bed of their security, for indeed the word, and the light thereof doth torment these who dwell in the earth: and truly this is a marvellous thing, which winneth in upon mens secret designs, and counsels, doth reveal to them the most close thoughts of their heart, which they are sure mens eye could not reach, taketh them down through themselves, and yet, that the world knoweth not whence it is, yea, are they not forced to confesse, what a great difference they find betwixt the word from the mouth of some, who are holy, and serious though held out in greatest simplicity, then from others even of greater gifts, and accompanied with more shew of eloquence,

that surely the one hath an other sound, and relish, speaketh more feelingly home to their heart, then the most polished discourse of greatest oratours.

8. One witness more I shall here give to the truth of this promise, even these eminent examples of the grace of God, which in every age have shined in the firmament of the Church, some in love, and zeal, some in patience, and humility, some in the strong acts of faith, and self denial; which doe certainly demonstrat a more excellent spirit then that which is in the world, whence they appear with another lustre in their walk, and carriage, and have a sweet, and fragrant savour of the spirit to the very discerning of bystanders, which truly sheweth that his wind doth blow on his garden, when the spices send forth so pleasant a sent.

FOURTH. We find an expresse Promise in the word of Deliverance to the Church in a low, and oppressed condition, that surely the Lord will plead her cause, will deliver his People when he seeth their strength is gone, and save them from the hands of their enemies, Ps. 18: 47, 48, 50. Ps. 22: 4, 5. Is. 54: 17. Is. 51: 23.

It is true, this promise hath its bounds, limits, and provisions which should be taken along in the application thereof, we know the Covenant of God with particular Churches is conditional only, he promiseth that he will be with them while they are with him, yea, it is oft seen, (and there is no jarr here with this promise) that a People professing the Gospel, confederat with God: following duty, have even turned their back before the enemy, and in the holy providence of God, have for a time been given up to their fierce rage and violence; but it is also sure that this promise hath an accomplishment, and in the day of the Churches strait the Lord hath oft appeared, by a strong outstretched hand for her help, his own arm brought salvation to his People, when they sought to him; for God is known in her palaces for a refuge, yea, surely

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surely the Church might oft sing that song on such clear grounds as though with Israel she had been standing at the red sea, *thy right hand, O Lord, is full of power, thy right hand hath dashed in pieces thy enemies*; for what nation, or People is like this to whom he hath shewed such marvellous things.

Now to shew forth the faithfulness of God in this promise, I would offer some few things that are a most clear and undenyable witness thereto.

1. There are few ages, but wee have some record of the churches condition, which hold forth such signal convincing providences of God, in behalf of his oppressed church and people, as may be a manifest seal to this truth; it is true some times have been more remarkable for suffering, times of judgement & of a growing trial wherein this truth hath not so clearly shined forth, yea that long night which the church had under Antichrist, might seem to call it in question; but neverthelesse, if men take a serious look of the Lords way, and series of providence in ages past, comparing one time with another, what the straits, and most extream case of the church hath at last resolved in, they will find cause to cry with astonishment, *great deliverances giveth he to his people*, yea, the Lord hath done great things for them. I am sure, were there a full record with that true account which might be given, of these more remarkable deliverances, that particular churches have met with, since the first planting of the Gospel among them, wherein Gods very immediat hand for their help hath been discernable, it should *non-plus* the World, and greatest Atheists anent the real outmaking of this promise.

2. The Confession even of the Churches enemies hath oft witnessed this truth, that in pursuing their malice to trouble and undoe her, they have but undone themselves; how tormenting disappointments have caused their very flesh to pine away, and the close and issue of their rage forced this conviction from them at last, that the Church is a burdensome stone, to be lifted up, a party with whom

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it is full of hazard to meddle; have not such been made to discern something of a divine hand, so clearly against them, blasting their counsels, and most promising attempts, as if their eyes with Balaam had been opened to see the Angel in their way, yea in all ages it is known how the conscience even of the worst hath oft bewrayed something of a presaging fear they have had of these whom they pursued with greatest malice, and a dreadful impression they had of a praying people, and their prayers.

3. This truth hath had the clearest witness in times of the Churches greatest strait, and extremity, when difficulties have appeared insuperable and an outgate in an ordinary way of providence most hopelesse, when visible meanes have been withdrawn, all refuge failed, and none to help, that in such a day the Lord hath been seen upon the mount and unexpectedly by very strange midfes brought deliverance to a broken, almost ruined Church, even as it were betwixt the bridge, and the water; so that who would have a clear view of the accomplishment of this promise, may but turn back on these more remarkable extream exigences of the Churches condition, and there have it, how of a sweet sun shine hath followed the most dark, and cloudy times, a raging storm hath resolved into a refreshing calm, yea, that with a further growth of the Churches trial, and doubling of her burden, her enlargement, and outgate hath broken up with these great and obvious remarks therein that it was a convincing return of prayer, & wrestling, with a further addition of some new and singular mercy therewith, yea, some eminent act of judgment upon her adversaries.

4. The greatest advantage, and victories which men have got over the Churches, and people of God can also bear witness to this, that when the wicked have sprung up like the grass, and the workers of iniquity seemed to flourish, this very way hath the Lord taken to bring about a more full deliverance: Yea, on the other hand, hath it not been very obvious how the Churches gain hath been brought forth out of greatest loss, that these wounds which

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which seemed most deadly, by the infinitely wise providence of God, have turned to her most effectual, and through cure; and mens unreasonable violence, & rage against the Church hath oft had an evident tendency to bring about even that whereto it seemed most directly contrary, some further mercy, and deliverance, then could have been expected; as the Amorites refusing Israel but passage through their land did prove the very mean to give them more then they sought, the possession of that land for an inheritance.

5. This witnes the observation of the Church in all ages can bear to this promise, that deliverance hath oft sprung up, and been brought to her hand from an airth, and by such meanes, as none would have expected, by such, as none but God could doe; a sudden report and rumour; *1 Sam. 23. ver. 27.* meanes that have been not only small, and improbable but that looked directly contrary, as in bringing the Church out of Egypt, yea, sometime by the wicked being ensnared in the work of their own hands, is it not obvious, how the Lord hath trysted mens private interests to put them on, for befriending his Church? and hath caused the earth to help the woman and raised up one oppressour to punish another, yea, often hath prepared carpenters, whence it was least thought, to cut the horns of these who had scattered his people.

6. There is this convincing witnes to the truth of such a promise, that sudden remarkable change, which may be oft discerned both on mens inward frame, and the outward face of the Church, when a time of mercy, and enlargement is come; instruments raised of the Lord with a discernable elevation of their spirits to act, and doe exploits, the feeble then made strong, and these who sometime would have fainted at an ordinary piece of service dare with such a gale of divine assistance run, as it were, through a troupe, and overleap a wall; for indeed this may in all ages be obvious, how easy it is to move, in the day when the Lord moveth for his people, and strengthneth the girdle of their loines, that it was not their bow, or sword, which got them

them the victory, but the very finger of God, something above the counsels of men, ordinary meanes, which hath sometimes been made clear as the noonday, so that even, at some distance, these who are wise to discern the times, did see when there was a breaking up of a day of a Churches hope, how a previous motion, and stir amongst the dry bones, the Lord as in the top of the mulberry trees hath been then discernable, & some promising appearance from the present disposition, and temper of the Godly in that time (though we must grant mercy & soveraign grace, hath oft trysted the Church when little of this hath appeared) which, like the breaking up of that cloud in the top of mount Carmel to the Prophet, though at first but as an handbreath hath shewed that deliverance to the Church was not far off.

7. I would adde this witness also; these convincing providences which in all ages have been shewed against the enemies of the Church, such as men could not passe without some remark, what an issue these have had, who have sometimes been a sore rod on the People of God, yea, a terroar in the land of the living. How they have become a most abject and contemptible party, like bees who have lost their sting; their countenance hath been changed, and they ceased to be any more a fear, when once their work was done, and the date of their commission for the humbling, and trying of the Church expired; yea a judicial stroke from the Lord, hath been often seen upon their very judgement, and resolutions, which could not then serve them to trouble, and afflict the Church, the day being turned, and the time of her deliverance come.

FIFTH. There is this *Promise* also which concerneth the Church in general, as well as Christians in their personal case, *that all things work together for the good of these who love God*, Rom. 8. 28. the accomplishment whereof as it is written out in providence to the observation of men, I would here touch.

This is indeed a great comprehensive promise, which in the constant course, and tenor of providence about the Church we may see, it doth take place; how these turnings and changes of the World, the most strange emergents of the time, the various motions, and interests of men, doe cooperat together, and have an undoubted tendency to bring forth the Churches good as though they did intentionally act for the same, there wil indeed, one day, be a more clear, and marvellous discovery of this, when the Lord hath perfected his work, and the mystery of God is finished, the Church brought safe to the harbour, then shall it be fully manifest, to what end all these stormes, and crosse winds in the counsels, and designs of men were, these things which in the time could not be understood, but seemed perplexed and strange, did really worke for the Churches good, for then men will see with their eyes a full performance of the word; yet we must say, even here, in every age, amidst the various changes of the Churches case, this hath so clear an outmaking, that there is no serious observer of providence, but may bear witness to it.

1. That not only the Churches good, but even her greatest good, hath most clearly had its rise, and been brought forth out of the greatest mischiefs, and hurts intended against her; that if we search the Scripture, and will turn over these after records of the Churches condition, we shall there find the most remarkable attempts, and plots such as Pharaohs last essay to destroy the Israelites, Hamans great design to root out the seed of the Jewes, that great Masterplot Sathan once had on foot, to crush the Gospel, and the Christian Church by crucifying her head, yea, in these last times Antichrists killing the witnesses have all, as if really intended by the instruments as well as the first mover, brought forth the Churches greatest good; so as the after mercy, and outgate hath carried some visible proportion to her trial, and to the greatnes of her adversaries design.

2. It may be also clear, if we but trace back these memorable

rable changes, which have been up and down the earth, how direct a tendency they have had to this end, did not the bringing down that great image of the Monarchies witness this? We finde Nebuchadnezzar raised up as a rod to the Church, and Cyrus for a deliverer; we may see the Persian, and Grecian Monarchies brought down, to make way for the setting up of the Messiah his Kingdome. Antiochus must stand up a little for a sharp trial, and his downfal give the Church a new breathing, and hold forth to after ages a remarkable monument of the judgement of God against his enemies. Peaceable Augustus must tryft with his time in whose dayes shall be abundance of peace; we finde a Titus set up to execute the judgement of God on the Jewes, to make way for a further enlargement to the gentil Church, a Nero, and Domitian to help forward the Churches suffering, and a Constantine to give her some rest, after so long, and sore an assault, and at last, the Roman empire mouldred down for Antichrists upsetting, to accomplish what did remain of the sufferings of Christ, in his Church by that adversary.

3. We may oft see a very strange tryft, and concurrence of things, how instruments act to bring about the Lords end and advance his Churches interest, even while each one doth most vigorously drive their own proper end, and design, which sheweth there is surely a living spirit in the wheels, that ordereth these motions, a supream and first mover that can thus determine them, whither they will, or not, to serve his end and the Churches good, when they most directly intend the contrary.

4. We have seen how in mens plotting the ruine of the Church there is oft an unseen hand determining their judgement, and inclination to fall upon that very way, then which we would think nothing could have been more direct for her good and their own ruine, how an Hushai hath been sent in or some have been stirred up amongst themselves (upon their own interest) to break the pernicious counsels, and designs of others.

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ches enemies among themselves, brought to such an height, and to tryt so seasonably, that onlookers might clearly perceive that it hath been from the Lord, a judgement for their rage and violence against his poor oppressed People.

6. We have seen the Churches enemies raised to a strange height, all advantages favouring them, until their plot and mine hath been ripe for springing, and lo, at that very choke, something unexpected hath fallen out which did turn their former successe to their further ruine, yea, disappoint all; this the World is ready to call some fatal, and malevolent conjunction, which cannot be resisted, and what is this in effect, but the witnes of mens conscience to a divine hand?

7. Have we not seen some fore dath, and overthrow of the Church bring forth her good, and a more full victory, how visible help and meanes have been taken out of the way, that something above meanes might be seen in her condition, even in that day, when all hath been given for lost, yea, truths losing the day upon the field, bring forth her triumph on the scaffold, and at the stake.

8. We have seen most despicable, and ordinary things, made subservient for some great piece of the Lords work, a very small thing made the first rise of strange revolutions, that remarkable changes have been oft lying in the bosome of a common providence; yea, truely we finde both Scripture, and the observation of after ages witness that the Churches deliverance, and outgate did almost never come that way, by such a method, and meanes, as she had most expected the same, and that Gods time of working may be oft very contrary to our time of expecting.

I shall only adde, is it not oft seen (which I am sure all eyes can witness,) how mens endeavours to darken the truth by erour hath been an effectual meanes for its further clearing? That the growing of a trial, a violent, and fore exacting upon the Church, hath kindly wrought towards her outgate, and enlargement, her meat hath been oft brought even out of the eater, by midles most destructive thereto,

thereto, and a sword must pierce the Churches heart, that thoughts of many may be discovered, a time of persecution must help to cure the divisions amongst the godly, and bring them together in the furnace, which prosperity could not doe; yea it is oft seen, which former ages can also witness, that the very undoing of the Church hath been Gods blest way, to keep her from being undone.

THE SECOND BRANCH.

DOth concern these *Scripture treatnings which are held forth in the word, with a respect to the visible Church,* and against a people professing the Gospel, that no priviledges they have above others shall exeeem them from judgment; yea and from very sad strokes, he hath knowen them above the rest of the World, he will contend with them most severely because of sin, and such particular evils as we find the Word threatneth.

I touched a little some Scripture threatnings, in the preceding argument as concerned Christians in their privat experience; what I here intend is to point at this truth, as it is written in the providences, and judgments of every time to mens observation, how judgments from the Lord, which point, as with the finger, at the abounding sins of that time, do reach a land, and particular Churches, according to the threatnings of the word; this is indeed manifest, that the greatest promises made to a people, we find backed with saddest threatnings, and accordingly we find the greatest monuments of wrath have usually been set up, where sometimes the largest offers of the Gospel were; yea, that the anger of the Lord may draw so deep against a people professing his name, as to make their land desolate, (and the high wayes thereof mourn; for in this precinct of the Church doth both judgment and mercy most eminently shine forth, and the Lords way there doth differ from that he hath with any other people.

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of sin are also verifed in their judgments, I shall touch a few instances, that are most known, and obvious, where we may lay the word, and observation of the Church together, and see how they answer one the other.

First we find the *Threatnings of the word do point at the time of a peoples judgment*, 1 *Thes.* 2. *ver.* 16. *Rev.* 14. *ver.* 15. 18. That when they fill up the measure of their sin, and their cup is full, the Lord will not then defer the execution; until the cup of the Amorites was full he did let them alone; and we find answer deferred to the cry of the souls under the altar, for avenging their blood on Antichrist, because that accursed party had yet more to do against the Church, and the Saints more to suffer under their hand.

Now to witness the accomplishment of this; let us but consider what in all times may be observed. First that there is an ordinary growth, and height of sin, which a land cometh to before destruction, some national, and universal spreading thereof, prodigious outbreakings, the utter rejecting of reproof, which shew that a peoples case must then be on some turn, yea, that strange, and un-usuall sinning, useth to go before some strange stroke. 2. Before judgement come, is it not seen, how the sin of a people hath become so daring, that it hath had a loud cry? yea, their case hath been such as did justify the Lords procedure against them, even in the conscience of all lookers, that he did it not without much cause. 3. Is it not easy for such as are wise to know the times, to see nigher coming on a land, when sin is at some dreadful height, by considering the word and the Lords usual way with a people in such a case? Yea, hath there not then been some special forewarnings, a more then ordinary impression of judgement upon the spirits of the godly? the hiding of many of them in the grave, which, as threatening prefiges, hath shewed the near approach of a stroke. 4. There doth not usually want even some Noah, or Jonas, the Ministers of God sent forth to threaten, who as watchmen upon the wall are discerning hazard at distance, yea, with an
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observable pressure then upon their spirit, and a more than ordinary agreement amongst themselves to cry out, and give the people warning, when the time of judgement hath been drawing near.

2. It is clear, *there are some speciale vils, and sins of a time, which we find the word most dreadfully doth threaten*, yea in a peculiar way it doth put a mark upon them that though the Lord should passe by many infirmities in a Church, and people professing his name; yet, for such, and such sins as we find, in *Amos 1. ver. 2.* he will not turn away the punishment thereof, but hath solemnly declared, by his truth and faithfulness, that these shall not passe without some visible mark, even before the world, of his anger: now in this the Scripture is clear, and lets us see there are some sins more particularly threatned, some land destroying sins that have as it were the marke set on them, which doe especially provoke the holy indignation, and jealousy of God; such as *idolatry*, corrupting the Worship of God; *Perjury*, and *Covenant-breaking*, shall they break my Covenant, and escape saith the Lord, *Ezek. 17. ver. 15.* also departing from God, and his way, for this the land shall be desolat as in *Jerem. 9. ver. 12, 13.* yea blood guiltines which the earth shall not cover, and for which the sword shall not depart, even from the house & family of David, *2 Sam. 12. 10.*

Now to evidence the accomplishment hereof I shall point at some things most obvious to the observation of every time, how terribly the Lord useth to plead for such things, and by some exemplary stroke, and judgement point them out, as we find them particularly set by themselves in the word, and threatnings thereof.

First how in these sins, thus marked, men may see how their judgements use not wholly to be deferred to another world, but though much is off passed here, and laid over to that last, and great judgement, yet, upon such sins the Lord hath put some mark of his displeasure, even in this life. 2. That for these he useth to condemn, before the sun, and in the view of men; his judgements are indeed

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oft secret, and doe consume as a moth, but upon such sins we may frequently see, some publik, visible stroke is made to follow that the world cannot passe without a remark. 3. That the Lord also useth to be a very swift witness against such evils, for as we find the oppression of the Church hath a lowd cry, and the blood of the saints *how long*? it is also seen these forementioned sins do much hasten judgement, so as seldome that generation passeth away without some witness thereto; it is rarely found that some great revolt of a people from God, and breaking Covenant with him, doth ly long over unpunished, nor doth the hoary head of the violent, and bloody man go oft to the grave in peace. 4. That these sins use to be followed with some very dreadful, and eminent stroke, which have made the land desolat, their cities sometime wast, and a ruinous heap, yea, houses great, and fair to be without inhabitants; so as men have with astonishment enquired, why is all this comed to passe; and it was easy to answer, even for such, and such evils hath the Lord done this, according to his word. 5. That a divine hand useth to be most discernable in the punishment of such sins because of a very clear resemblance betwixt them, and the stroke, which hath forced their own conscience, as well as of onlookers to confesse the Righteousnes of God therein. 6. That the Lord will put some mark of his anger on the choicest of his servants for any accession to such sins, these to whom he hath given their soul for a prey, have yet got a fore outward stroke, upon such an account, which hath followed them to the grave; for this the sword shall not depart from Davids house: Idolatry rent the Kingdome from the posterity of Salomon. Jonas shall not escape for his rebellion, yea, God was wroth with Moses, and no intreaty shall hinder his dying in the wilderness. I may adde, hath not the Lords controversy on this ground even reached their posterity, which may shew that these threatnings are sad earnest, and such sins are not more particularly pointed at in the word, then they have been in after ages made exemplary in judgement.

3. *A peoples lukwarmenesse, their slighting of the gospel;* and not receiving the love of the truth, we find sadly threatened in the word, *Rev. 3. ver. 15. 16. Theff. 2. ver. 10, 11.* and truly we must say they have not fallen to the ground in any age without an accomplishment, as frequent observation can witness. First how a peoples entring upon a Religious way, their pursuing a form of reformation, and not thorough for God therein, but on carnal grounds, hath thus put them in a worse condition then before, for truly mens hypocrisy, in going about a good work doth threaten more, then the performance thereof doth promise. Jehu got a temporal reward but his posterity must at length reckon for all the blood of Jezreel. 2. That no people use to be further from getting good of the gospel then such who have been under most clear, and greatest convictions, so at it is found, there is oft more acceffe to gain amongst the savages, then these who have sit their day while the tide did flow, yea, ministers have found most discouragement to labour in these parts where the word hath been long preached with power. 3. It is seen, how light not improved will turn a People more grosse, and is usually followed with some remarkable growth in sin, that the more the word doth put a restraint on mens corruption, the more it rageth; so as it may be observed what a very black dy, and collour, the powerful preaching of the Gospel hath put upon a People, as a visible mark of judgement on such who profit not thereby. 4. Is it not seen how mens formality in the matters of God hath been oft punished even with the taking away of the forme? Yea, that seldome error, and delusion doth want a harvest amongst a People who receive not the truth in love. 5. Hath not slighting of the Gospel been at last followed with some visible restraint, and inhibition, both upon the ordinances, and dispensers thereof, a judicial withdrawing of the Spirit, as to the work of conversion, and conviction, whereby the Lord doth plainly cease to be a reprover to such, yea, even saith, bind up the Law, and seal the Testimony.

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4. *The word doth also threaten carnal Security* (a disease whereof the Church is oft in great hazard) yea, we find it holds forth a certain connexion betwixt spiritual judgements upon a People, and some outward strokes to follow thereon, that these who are under that first woe, and plague upon their spirits, are then near to some judgment upon their persons, and may expect a sharp wakening; in hearing they shall not understand, &c. but the close is, until their cities be consumed without inhabitants, and there be an utter desolation, yea, we find judgement doth begin as a moth in that 5. of Hos. but in the 14. ver. it doth turn at last to be a lion. We may truly say the fulfilling of this hath in all ages of the Church been obvious. 1. That as the first part of the Churches deliverance is usually spiritual, so it is found the first step of judgement, and the execution thereof against a People, hath been upon their spirits; that serious discerners of the time might know that the night was fast coming on, and some sad outward stroke on a land, by the abounding of spiritual judgements. 2. It is clear the most dreadful strokes that ever come on a particular Church, doe usually find it in such a case, judicially hardened, and under many warnings plagued with security; thus did the flood finde the old World, and before that desolating stroke on Jerusalem by the Romans, were not the Jewes in such a case. Salvain can tell how it was with the African Churches, before that dreadful inundation of the Gothes, and Vandals, yea, the Churches records in all ages doe witness that before any sad stroke or persecution came upon a People, a deep sleep, and lethargie, hath been previous thereto; gray haire might have been seen upon them, and the Word doth even shew that this will be the last disease whereof the Church shall be sick before the great day of the Lord. 3. It is also seen how spiritual judgements when they grow upon a people, make great dispatch, and do quickly ripen for some further stroke, that when men have run down their conscience and are past reproof of the word, going on from evil to worse, the case cometh then to be clear, and ready for the finall discussion of the processe.

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5. *The word doth denounce woe againſt the troublers of the Church*, and theſe who are her perſecutors, that the Lord ſhall recompence tribulation to ſuch, and plead with her oppreſſours, the accompliſhment whereof hath been truly manifeſt, yea to the obſervation even of the world. *Iſai. 10: 5. 2 Theſſ. 1: v. 6. 1.* That eminent oppreſſors of the Church have ſeldome gone out of the world without ſome remark of divine anger upon them; ſurely if there were a record of ſuch inſtances that in every age hath been conſpicuous, men ſhould be forced to ſee and ſay that the moſt noted enemies, and perſecutors of the ſaints have been alſo the moſt convincing & noted examples of judgement in the time. 2. That the Churches ſuffering uſeth to go before a day of vengeance on the inſtruments thereof; we find Jehu got an outward reward for executing the judgement of God on his enemies; but as for theſe men who have been the rod of the Church it hath been ſeen that they have not long wanted ſome ſcourge as fore upon themſelves, as they have been to his People, and that at laſt theſe have payed dear for their ſervice. 3. We may ſee how this alſo doth help to finiſh the controverſy of God, with men, and their houſes, that for this he hath taken many away in the miſt of their dayes, & made them ceaſe to be, who would not ceaſe to trouble the Church, while they had a being; yea that he had taken them in his own hand, whom men could not reach, & made their down-caſting in the miſt of themſelves.

6. *Doth not the Scripture threaten carnal confidence, in a People*, the putting of their truſt in man or in any outward inſtruments, *Jer. 17. ver. 5. 6. 17.* to clear the accompliſhment whereof, let us but compare the word, and the Churches obſervation together, and we will find. 1. That outward meanes have never more miſcaried then when moſt promiſing, and when there was greateſt expectation from the ſame, yea, that very eminent inſtruments when much leaned to, have been obſervably blaſted, and made to ſhrink under ſuch a burden. 2. That theſe whom the Lord had made much uſe of, yea, honoured to be
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great instruments in the service of the Church, have oft had some discernable blot, to reprove mens overlading of instruments with their esteem; a Tertullian, an Origen in ancient times, yea, even a Luther, in these latter ages must goe with some halt to the grave. 3. That many who have been useful in the Church for a time, the Lord doth oft lay by, yea, maketh not use of them to the end, but, the last may be made first, and truely that excesse in mens esteem, putting a further weight on some meanes, then they could bear, hath oft helped to render many useles. 4. Is it not also seen, how one extremity is thus plagued with an other? None more ready to shrink in a day of trouble, then such who at a distance seemed most daring, yea, none more ready to fall in that excesse of undervaluing instruments, then these who have most exceeded upon the other hand.

7. *Doe we not find the word threaten, and in a special way point at corrupt ministers, unfaithful watchmen who give not warning to the Church, these shepheards that feed themselves, but not the flock, the leaders of a people that cause them to err, and by their practice to stumble at the law Mal. 2: ver. 3. ver. 9.*

The accomplishment whereof hath in all ages been very discernable. First how such have usually been most noted as the greatest and most violent enemies which the Church hath, at any time, had, yea that no course hath been so evil and gross that hath wanted some of these to help it on, whose hatred, and persecution of the Godly hath been found to exceed the most openly profane and profligat in that time. 2. That as they are particularly threatned above others in the word, so they get also some remarkable cast above others in their judgement, and having once lost their favour become vile, and loathsome even to the worst of men, are contemptible in the eyes of such whom they seek in a sinful way to please, yea have a worse favour, then the prophaneest wretches, that being verified in them, *Corruptio optimi, pessima.* 3. That these do seldom make a good retreat from an evil way; so as it is an usual obler-

vation, it is rare for Church men to repent, or a fallen star to shine again. 4. Are not such oft smitten even in their gifts, which we may see wither, and drie up upon them while not faithfully improved, yea; to the very conviction of their hearers to have lost that edge which once they had in their ministry? 5. I must add another remark (though I desire to deale with fear, and much tenderneſſe, in ſuch an application of the judgement of God) how the Lord doth oft put ſome note of his wrath on the children, and offpring of unfaithful Miniſters, that it hath been ſeen none more wretched and groſſe; where to as their evil practice, and example hath been a ſpecial help, ſo like wiſe are they thus puniſhed of the Lord, who did not ſeek to beget Children to him, by the Word, but through their way did rather cauſe many to err and fal.

THE THIRD BRANCH.

HAVING ſpoke ſomething how the Scripture both as to the promiſes, and threatnings thereof is evidently fulfilled in the Lords ordinary way of procedure with his Chnrch, I would a little further follow this argument, *how this alſo hath a manifold accompliſhment, even in theſe moſt ſtrange and dark paſſages of providence, whereat men are ready to ſtumble and challenge the ſpotleſſe righteouſnes of God, and his faithfulnes therein; but if we lay them to that meaſure, and line of the word which is ſtretched over the whole work of providence, we will ſee how well theſe doe agree, and answer one to the other, yea that all the paths wherein God walketh towards his Church, and people, are ſurely mercy, and truth.*

To clear this I ſhall point at ſome footſteps of the providence of God in the world, and about the Church which would ſeem moſt dark, yea a contradiction to his word, and promiſe, but are plain and manifeſt, if weighed in the ballance of the ſanctuary, where we may have a ſatisfying look, and reſolution of theſe things which other wayes would

would be too hard for us to understand, and may see, how straight these paths are which we thought crooked; yea, how easy and passable, the greatest deeps of providence would be, both as to Gods way with his Church, and in our own particular case, when once they are set over against the word. I shall touch this a litle in these following instances.

1. *It may seem strange how the Churches trouble and strait is oft seen to encrease, with the first stirrings of her deliverance;* yea, when some remarkable mercy, and outgate is in the bringing forth, the first step thereof would seem to put her further aback, and in a worse condition then before. This is indeed a piece of the Lords way with his Church which in many instances may be witnessed, but let us take the word along therewith, and we will find. 1. How the Church is oft at the brink of the grave even when her case is upon a turn, and how it is congruous to his way (whose paths are in the deep waters, who cloatheth himself with darknes, that men should not find any thing after him, or lay down absolute conclusions concerning his dealing) that the motions of providence should be oft so perplexed, and various. 2. Did not the case of the Church in Egypt seem much worse, their burdens doubled upon them, even when their deliverance was breaking up? 3. Joseph to be sold as a slave, and in Egypt turned in to a dungeon would seem steps of providence, very unlike the thing which God was driving at thereby, and yet we see how kindly these did work towards the same. 4. The Church in Micah, 4: ver. 10. When she was even at the door next to a deliverance, her tryal was even at the greatest height, *be in pain, and labour to bring forth, for ye shall goe to Babylon and there be delivered:* but sorest pangs in the birth do usually promise the best issue. 5. It was the step of the providence of God, which of all seemd most dreadful to the Church in Ester, the sealing of the decree, and sending it forth to root out the whole

seed of the Jewes, while Haman still flourished, but lo this was the very step that wrought most thoroughly for her deliverance, and is not a wet mourning seed time a Scripture-prefage of a good harvest.

2. *The sore interruptions which a peoples endeavours for Reformation, and to promote the Kingdome of Christ have met with,* even when set about with a clear call, yea, solemn and serious engagements to God, would seem strange, and a shaking piece of providence; and truly this is oft seen, as an usual attendant on reformation; how unsuperable like difficultyes, and unexpected lets do grow up in the way thereof; thus when Luther, and other instruments were raised up in Germany, to pursue the Churches Reformation, what cruel edicts were then set forth to give it a dash: division among themselves, the rising up of the Boors, & Anabaptists: what a pure, and through reformation was on foot under Edward the sixth in England, and what a dreadful storm did quickly break it up, for that time; and I would adde, what the present case of the Church in Brittain, and Ireland may at this day witness, where once the Lord so eminently appeared in a begun Reformation, which now is at so great a stand, but let us go in to the scripture with this and we will find. 1. There is a vive portraiture of providence in the affaires of the Church held forth in that vision which Ezekiel had of the wheelles at the river Chebar, whose mysterious motions, and turnings so crosse one to the other, without any discord therein, as to the end, to which they were directed, doth witness the rational, and wise conduct of providence: the Lords work about his Church is a most shadowed and elaborat piece, which men cannot see, before their eye, as they see behind upon a review, while ordinary causes do oft vary in their operation, yea, goe out of the common road, but scripture will make this very plain. 2. Was not Nehemiah, Ezra, and Zerobabel at their work, and duty, and had an expresse call for building of the temple, yet, how great, and frequent interruptions did they find, sometimes environed with difficulties, *Zach. 4: ver. 7. Who art thou great*

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mountain before Zerobabel? Yea, they were put to hold the sword and build, to watch and work at once, because of their enemies. 3. What a very sore backset was the Church at *Hab. 3.* *Revive thy work ô Lord in the midst of the years*, this was both a great and long interruption, yea, doe we not find her almost at a *non plus* with a quere which no visible appearance could answer, *by whom shall Jacob arise for he is small?* 4. We find a special reformation set on foot by Hezekiah with a solemn Covenant, by the Princes, Priests, and body of the People, with a setting up of the pure Worship, and ordinances of God, but lo a sharp storm is soon after, by Sennacherib, yea Hezekiah scarcely is in his grave, when his Son doth bring in corruption, & persecution both at once; and when the christian Church in the times of the Apostles begun to flourish, succeſſe following the Gospel, did not a sad interruption, and scattering follow, *Act. 8. 5.* This is promised that Zions walls shall even in troublesome times be built. and her being brought to a heap of rubbish was but making way for a further advance, that in the building of her again the Lord might appear in his glory; and is it not clear, that Christ coming in the Gospel, and power thereof to purge his Church, and carry on a reformation. *Mal. 3. ver. 4.* *proverth a searching, and trying time which men cannot endure, for the Word, and clear discovery of sin, and other shaking dispensations which doe usually attend such times and torment them who dwell on the earth, yea, and put the Devil, and corruption of men aloft, with all rage to oppose the same.*

3. That a sad overclouding, and darknes should come on a land after most special manifestation of the power and glory of God therein, and that a time of the Gospel with much light should be so neer a forerunner of wrath, and judgement, would seem a strange piece of providence, and cause a serious enquiry how such eminent appearances of God for a people, such great confirmations, observable success for a time, with many signal encouragements, should al seem to resolve in a desolating stroke, and ruine? This may be

instanted in that Protestant war in France where instruments were remarkably raised, fitted of the Lord for the service of that time, had much of his presence, and countenance, yet to resolve thus in a bloody massacre, likewises these confederat German Princes, *Saxony, and Landgrave of Hesse*, Men eminent for piety, carried forth with much zeal for God, for defence of the truth, yea, in the beginning of that war having many promising encouragements, yet, remarkably deserted of the Lord with very sad like consequences following the same. Let us consider also the late Bohemian war, stated upon necessary defence of Religion and liberty, and at first attended with some smiling providences, should resolve into so great a desolation, and ruine: yea, the Church of Ireland, O, what a dreadful massacre of the protestants there did quickly follow one of the most solemn times of the power of God and outpouring of the Spirit that we ever heard of since the dayes of the Apostles. I confesse this may have a strange aspect, & is a part of the marvellous wayes of the Lord, but when we take it into the word, we will find there is no jar, or discord here, for. 1. It might seem as strange, and astonishing what Baruch got from the Lord in answer to his complaint, *Jerem. 45.* that he would pluck up what he had planted, and cast down that which he had built, for a work to be thus thrown down, where the Lord had once so eminently appeared, and given his People many confirmations, might then occasion great thoughts of heart, yet the unspotted righteousness of God, and his truth was apparent therein; yea, after that discourse, and all these large promises, which Christ gave his disciples in that sixteenth of John, we find all is shut up with that, the houre is coming, and now is that ye shall be scattered. 2. What strange providences did tryst the Church in the wilderness, sometime brought back to the red sea, tryed with hunger, and nakedness, consumed with various strokes, and many yeares wandering until most of that generation, who came out of Egypt filled their graves in the journey, and yet this was after

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most eminent confirmations, and as clear signes of Gods
presence as ever a People had. 3. We find a publick refor-
mation most zealously profecute by Josias, which look-
ed like the renewed espousales of that land with God,
by a solemn Covenant, yet, quickly after night came
on that land with a long captivity, and Josias did fall by
the sword. 4. Was there not a bright sun-blink, and flow-
rishing plantation of the Gospel in Judea a little before
the desolation of that land by the Romans, yea, we will
find it clear from the word that times of much light,
and reformation doe much sooner ripen for a stroke
then any other times. 5. It is very manifest that parti-
cular Churches have their day where the Gospel hath its
appointed work, and their stroke at last may reach the
length of removing the candlestick, I truly think that sad
instance of Bohemia's case may have this observable
in it, that it had longer day, & enjoyment of the light
even from the times of *John Hus*, and *Jerom of Prague*
which was neer an 100 yeares before there was any day-
break on other parts, so that we would consider if their
night did come soon on, that their day was also much long-
er, yea, the stroke might tryft with the ebb of the tyde,
when their harvest was much gathered in, under so long a
continuance of the Gospel, though I dare not think, the
Lords work is utterly extinct there, but that Bohemias
dead, & withered root hath life yet in it and shall once
again bud forth.

4. *Is it not usually seen when judgement cometh on a land,*
that the Godly get the first stroke? but let us also consider
this in the word, where it is clear. 1. That judgement
must begin at the house of God, and the green tree; and
that the Churches trouble, and persecution is a fore-
runner of vengeance on her adversaries, do we not find,
there is a cup of the judgement of God? And O the last
is of a strong composition, for the wine is red and mix-
ed, and the dreg very thick which is reserved for the
troublers of the Church, and for such who are at ease in a
day of her grief, and truly they have the advantage that
drink.

drink first, *Bless are they whom thou chastenest, &c. The they may, rest in the day of their adversity until the pit be digged for the wicked*, yea, *Rev. 3:10.* we find keeping of the word of patience, which doth import suffering to the Church, goeth before some more universal stroke; & in that day proveth the safety, & protection of the People of God. 2. It is also clear that men may be raised up of the Lord, & followed with successe, when he hath them for a rod to his church, but that at last *Ashur* the rod of my wrath will I cast in the fire, saith the Lord, it is truly an evidence of great wrath upon a party to be made the rod, & executors of judgement upon the People of God, for they shall pay for it, by some sadder stroke then any trouble or suffering whereof they have been instruments.

5. *That prosperity, and successe should follow sometimes the worst of men in an evill course, and cause*, such a concurrence, and series of providence, as seemeth to smile on them even to the bringing of their sinful devices to passe, while the People of God have been made to fall in a just quarrel before their adversary, would seem an astonishing providence, but let us lay it fore against the Word, and there we will see. 1. That there is a prosperity which tendeth to destruction, *Prov. 11 ver. 32.* the tabernacles of the robbers prosper, *Job. 12 ver. 6.* and they that provoke God are secure, into whose hands he bringeth abundantly, but they doe not see that wickednes is its own punishment, and how it is a dreadful stroke to thrive in an ill course. Was not the Church shaken with such a providence, *Mal. 3. ver. 15.* Yea, tempted to call the proud happy, but in the *ver. 18.* They were taught from further observation to discern, and to put a difference between the righteous, and the wicked. 2. Doe we not find that even the signes, & predictions of false Prophets in favours of a sinful way may come to passe, *Deut. 18 ver. 1, 2.* Whereof the Church is thereof warned, and Gods intent in the same cleared, that it is for the tryall of his People, whither they will love, and fear the Lord, & cleave to his way, when providence would seem to

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shine on a crooked path. 3. Did not successe for a time attend Absolom? Israel as one man went after him, yea, the friends and counsellours of David; a fair wind did also favour Haman in his essay to ruin the Church. Jeremy is almost shaken with this, *yea they have taken root, yea, they grow, and bring forth fruit*, but is not this at last usually found an ominous weathergall before a storm? though the brutish man knoweth not, nor fooles lay it to heart for what the wicked doth oft spring, and flowrish; I would add Israels falling before Benjamin, it was an astonishing like providence; and Habakuck was put to a stand with such a thing, why the Lord lookt on, while the wicked devoured the righteous; Yea, Joshua was to cry out in an amazement, O Lord what shall I say, when Israel turneth their back before their enemies? But we have also the Lords intent therein witnessed by his word, that this is to humble and prove his People, that he may doe them good in the latter end, and thus he beatech them off from all carnal grounds of confidence, he wounderth them to a cure, that by bringing them low, he may raise, and fit them for a further mercy.

6. *What great disappointments hath the Church met with,* when outward grounds of confidence, and ordinary meanes have been most promising, as it is a thing most true, so it may seem strange at the first look, but let us bring it to the word & the case will be there answered. *Deut. 32. Why should one chase a thousand, but because their rock hath sold them,* and therefore their strength is gone with the Lords departing from them, for, when a time of judgement is come, even the mighty then find not their hands, counsel faileth to the ancient, ordinary means bring not forth their wonted effects, which Solomon sheweth and after ages have oft seen, the race not ever to the swift nor the battel to the strong, it is also clear from the word, how threatning a condition that is, for the People of God to be much carried out after meanes, or lifted up therewith, *Isai. 30. they will ride on horses, and this shall be their punishment,* but on the other hand the Lords way,

in bringing forth his greatest works hath not been by might and power, but oft by meanes most improbable, and unexpected.

7. *The long continuance of a heavy afflicting rod on the Church, without the appearance of an ousgate, or any return to much wrestling, and prayer on that account, may seem a strange step in Gods way with his People. But the word will answer us in such a case where it is clear.* 1. That there are no bounds in the Scripture set to the continuance of a trial, it doth not tell how long a sharp storm may ly on, either as to the Church, or any particular Christian; for it is a piece of the Lords secret counsel, but not of that which is revealed, it is enough that we know from it that men cannot make the Churches suffering longer, then Gods time. 2. It was a long terme that of Israels tryal in Egypt & after under the captivity, three hundred and ninety dayes must the Church ly on her left side. O how many a sad day, and wearysome night was there in that word, 70 weekes are determined upon thy people, and city Jerusalem. 3. Have not the Saints under a long trouble been almost the length of blaspemy, in their complaints, Isa. 40. ver. 27. *My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgement past over from my God.* Daniel, how pressing with the Lord was he that would hearken, and do, and not defer, and yet the return cometh not until the first year of Cyrus; yea, that cry of the altar, *How long,* doth it not even get a dilatory answer? For thus the Lord doth oft interpose his long suffering for some time, betwixt his people, and avenging of them. 4. It is also clear that there are many prayers before the throne, the return whereof is suspended, and an answer to Christians, in their particular, until that time when God shall build up Zion, and then the prayer of the destitute shall be remembered even as to Christians privat enlargement, when the Church shall be raised up. 5. We know the Churches enemies must have time to ripen, & it is not a storm of a few dayes, that will purge away the filth of the Daughters of Zion, too soon letting out of a sore may cause it under-

cot, and gather new matter, and truly the word can resolve us in this, that one minut sooner then Gods time would not be his peoples mercy.

8. It is oft seen *when there is some remarkable work of God on foot in a land, and some great outpouring of the spirit, how Sathan setteth up some usual counterfeit thereof, and bringeth forth something of his work in such a time with a very strange resemblance of the same; thus, with the preaching of the freedome of grace, and a clear discovery of that truth, did Libertinisme under a very specious pretext, spring up. Thus we find the Anabaptist, and Antinomian party, set up in Germany, to run down a Church-reformation under the shew of a more pure, and spiritual way; and of late did not Familisme in England, under pretext of a more spiritual dispensation cast off the very letter of the Scripture, turning it over in an Allegory, and in behalf of the liberty of prophesying, cry down a standing ministry; but though this may seem strange, yet, the Scripture is very clear concerning it.* 1. That even Sathan himself is transformed into an Angel of light, and in no shape proveth more dangerous to the Church. 2. That the most dreadful errours, and a false way will oft come near to the choicest exercises of the saints, and have such a resemblance to the same, that if it were possible the very elect should be deceived. 3. Was there not a Simon Magus with false miracles set up over against the Apostles, and when the time of the Messias drew near, did not then a Theudas, and Judas of Galilee, break forth to amuse the people? We find also an altar from Damascus, set up beside that which was shewed to Moses the Servant of the Lord in the mount, yea, when Moses, and Aaron was giving Pharaoh a sign, and did shew forth the marvellous power of God then did the Magicians cast down their rod also to counterfeit the same, by which the heart of Pharaoh was hardened.

9. *The abounding of much error, and heresie, now in the time of the Gospel, with that swift growth thereof, which is oft seen where the light most clearly shineth, would*

seem strange, yea, is a thing whereat many are ready to stumble, and thus to challenge the way of God: But is not the Scripture in this clearly verified so that this piece of providence, which is so shaking to many, if we take the word along with it, might be a very convincing confirmation to us of the same, for. 1. We find the Apostles, yea, Christ himself hath given expresse warning thereof, that this should be one of the special, and greatest tryals of the Christian Church, whereof the Old Testament we find doth little mention, that trial not concerning the Church then so much, as these after-times under the Messias Kingdome; wherein the event may be clearly seen, to answer these predictions, which are so frequent thereof in the New Testament. 2. Doth not the event also answer the word as to that particular way, and method, how error should be propagated, which is there clearly foretold, by subtil undermining, under the pretext of liberty with plausible insinuations, so that we must say not only the matter but with all these discernable tokens, even upon the manner, the word is made out. 3. Doe we not find this should be a judgement on men who receive not the love of the truth, and that after flourishing times of the Church, when he who rideth on the white horse is gone forth, the black horse, and his rider doth quickly follow, and truly it is seen that in the time of hottest persecutions, the Church hath not been so much troubled with this adversary, as when she did begin to get rest, and most of outward liberty, nor yet so at the first breaking up of the Gospel, as after some time of its continuance. 4. Doth not the event likewise thus answer the word, that in the breaking out of heresy in the Church, a spirit of error, the dephts and mighty working of Satan should be seen, which I am sure is undenyable, how manifest the interposing of these powers of darknes is therein, if we consider, 1. Its marvellous dispatch, and growth like a plague, and the arrow that flieth by day. 2. With what a discernable fury, and violence men are thus driven, as with an impetuous current, yea, oft a change on their very natural temper is

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seen most evidently. 3. These monstrous, and horrid things, which are oft brought forth, may shew whose hand is in such a birth. 4. That usual tendency that at last error hath to loosen in practice, which as it poisoneth the spring, and corrupteth the leading faculty the judgement, so we see, it moveth towards the vital spirits and doth influence the conversation; and the leprosy in the head breaketh forth in blaines through the whole body. 5. And do we not see how many grosse, and profane have been carried with this spate, how few get leave to stand, but are still carried from one step to another, and it is clear the world did never put out its rage so much against that way, as it hath done against the truth, except when some outward interest maketh it a quarrel.

10. *These great shakings, and commotions that use to attend the Gospel when it cometh in power to a land,* may also seem strange, yea, are ready to make many stumble. But is not the word verified herein, what great stirs, and trouble did tryst the Church after great light in pouring out of the spirit, Joel. 2. v. 29. we may there likewises see, how this giveth the World an Alarum, maketh the Kings, and great men of the earth run together, to hinder the rising of Christs Kingdome, Ps. 2. v. 3. let us break his bonds, &c. for truly in all ages Christs rising in the Gospel hath cast a terrour to its enemies, that this should be their fall and ruine, when the Apostle hath an effectual doore opened in his ministry he hath also much opposition thereto, but on the other hand all is still, and quiet while the strong man doth keep the house, yea, it is clear from the word, that where the Gospel cometh there is a red flag hung forth, that if men will not receive the same and subject to him who rideth on the white horse, one shall come after whose worke is to take peace from the earth, to put the world in a flame, and to accomplish the judgement of a despised gospel, who shall divide betwixt the husband, and wife, the parents, and children, wherein our blest Lord Jesus is expresse, Math. 10. ver. 34. *I come not to send peace on the earth, but rather a sword,* which might seem strange from him; but

it is to tell men if they will not embrace the offer of his peace they shall not have peace among themselves, for the message of the gospel must either be the best, or the worst fight that ever a land had.

11. *This may seem strange how in all ages men of greatest parts, and learning, are such usual opposers of the truth, yea, how the most sober, and calme will even appear violent in their way, the more the gospel is followed with power; but, O! how well doth this answer the scripture, for the wisdom of this world is enmity to God, 1 Cor. 3: ver. 19. not many wise according to the flesh comparatively, with these who hate the truth; of all the beasts of the field was not the serpent Satans choice; and if there be an Achitophel in the time, at him he will have a special pull, to such the simplicity of the gospel is foolishness, whereat they stumble; to such Christ is a rock of offence, we find the light doth torment them that dwell in the earth, will cause men blaspheme and discover that, which would not appear, whilst they got leave to enjoy their sinful peace without disturbance.*

12. *These strange judgments which may sometimes befall the Saints in their outward lot, yea, sometimes attended with some very astonishing circumstances would at the first look put men to a stand and to challenge the holy way of God. But let us weigh it in that ballance of the Scripture, and we will find. 1. That such hath been the complaint of the Saints, the Lords wounding them with the wound of a cruel one; what a strange query is that in Lament. 2: ver. 20. Behold, and consider, to whom thou hast done this shall the women eat the fruit of their womb, shall the Priest and Prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord, yea, did it not even to Solomon seem strange, Eccles. 8: ver. 14. That there are just men: to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked. 2. It looked like some strange stroke which forced David to this complaint, my enemies cast iniquity on me, and say an evil disease, or as the original readeth it, a thing of Belial cleaveth to him; we find Josias sell by the sword;*

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Eli, with one stroke hath his sons killed, his Daughter in law dying, and himselfe falling from his seat, and breaking his neck; yea Aaron hath both his sons killed before his eyes, by an immediat stroke from the Lord.

3. The word doth also shew, there is no jar betwixt this, and the tenor of the Covenant which God hath made with his people, to punish their transgression with rods, yea, sometimes by a strange rod, while he taketh not his loving kindnesse from them, and doe we not find that a cleanly trial may tryst the saints which the world would think a dreadful judgment, for great sufferings may be ordered of the Lord, to give some great examples thereby, we have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord.

13. *The grofs falling of these who have sometimes shined with much lustre in the Church* may be astonishing, but here also we may see the scripture made out, for it is clear. First that few instances of the most eminent of the Saints, we have on Scripture record, but there is some particular spot, and blemish also noted, a Naoh, Lot, Moses and David, yea, under the new Testament that great Apostle, whose denial of his master is set forth, to shew how far some may fall whom grace will again restore, and make up. 2. It is there clear, that some of understanding doe fall for a judgement to others, that such who will stumble, whose prejudice at the way of God is their choice, may thus further fall, and be broken. 3. The blest meaning and intent hereof we may there also read to Alarum men to watchfulnes, that such who stand may take heed lest they fall; to warrant also their adventuring on the grace of God; that none should fear to come in after such eminent examples.

14. *The contingency of events*, that we see many things in such a casual way fall out in the world, as by change onely without the rational conduct of providence (which doth infallibly direct things to a certain end,) this might at the first look, put men to a stand, yea, would seem to give Atheists some shadow to say, how doth God

see or doth the God of Jacob regard? But upon a more serious enquiry setting the word over against it, O what a sweet exercise should it be to consider. 1. That though the providence of God in things here beneath, moveth suitably to the nature of inferiour causes, whether necessary free, or contingent, not violenting them, or otherwayes making use of them, but according to their nature, so that though the event be necessary, and infallible, with a respect to the first cause, the determined counsel of God, it is nevertheless contingent in respect of its nearest cause; yet, this also on the other hand is clear, how these smallest, and most casual motions doe certainly fall under that comprehensive reach of providence, that even a sparrow falleth not to the ground by guesse, Rebecca cometh not with her pitcher to the well nor Ruth to glean in Boaz field at an adventure, but in these the providence of God must reach its end, and cannot miscarry. 2. That these things which to us would seem most casual we oft see in their tendency, and product, have been intended by the Lord, as a special mean for the promoting of his glory, wherein such a wonderful tryft and uniting of things in themselves most remote for that end may be truly discerned, that if prejudice do not shut mens eyes, they must confesse this can be no blind chance but some higher counsel, and conduct of the same; what would look more contingent then that Ahasuerus was indisposed to sleep and could have no rest in the night, or that a reflexion of the sun upon the waters should make them appear as blood to the Children of Moab? But we see what great things the Lord is thus bringing about. 3. Is it not oft manifest how not the smallest casualty; or circumstance providence doth losse without some improvement thereof? yea, that it guideth the stroke of a mans sword in the battel, and directeth the bullet to its appointed mark, and doth evidently check the starres and control that fatal necessity, which we are ready to fear may or will follow their aspect, and doth even determine these which in themselves are most free, & absolute, the heart, & will of man; must not the crowing of the cock, the souldiers

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dividing Christs garments fall out for an accomplishment of the Scripture, and though it was at a venture that that man drew the bow which sent Ahab to his grave, yet, it was no chance did direct the arrow between the very joynts of his armour. 4. Amidst the various emergents, and hazards of mens life, may not experience tell that surely things contingent are not abandoned to fortune, but there is a providence which doth number our haire, without which they cannot fall to the ground. O how astonishing may it be to think how surprizing hazards have been oft obviated? By what unexpected meanes men have been delivered from violent assaults, how help unlooked for hath even trysted at a choke, and an extremity, yea, while their foot was slipping even betwixt their falling, and fall they have been trysted with some remarkable cast of mercy. 5. Is it not easy to discern, how many accidents which seem most casual, yet by no humane prudence or industry can be prevented, but are observably brought about, and guided to fulfil the threatnings of the word on ungodly men, how was Sisera led in to the house of Jael, by other places, how should Hamans suit, for Mordecais death, tryst with that very morning, when the Kings thoughts were favourable to him, for it might seem had Haman been one day sooner he would have got his will.

(¶) This is a grave and serious subject, and in such a day should be much studied, when so many are ready to quarrel at the way of the Lord, and out of everie thing suck poison; when prejudices are now so universallie abounding against the truth, that we may see what a witness there is even in the most dark and astonishing steps of providence to the truth and faithfulness of God; yea how great a confirmation, we may thence have of our faith in such shaking times, whilst we see how these are special grounds against Atheisme, &c a most convincing refutation of the same, which are so much made use of to strengthen men in that way; I know the holy sovereignty of God should teach

us to adore and keep silence, when we cannot fathom the depths of providence, and on this great satisfying truth we should stay, and fix our selves, when things seem strange to us, *He is the Lord and with him there is no unrighteousness*; it is sure the condition of the damned in hell takes not off that obligation to declare his faithfulness, and adore his unspotted justice; but O then it would cease to be hell if such a blessed frame could have a being there: how ever it is a necessary and concerning duty when a matter seems too hard for us to understand to enquire in the sanctuary; there is a warrantable search after the works of God that we may know them: now besides these instances which have been already mentioned, I would yet further touch some few steps of the providence of God, with a speciall respect to this present time, which may seem very strange and be amazing; but when brought to that test of divine truth, will be found a most satisfying confirmation thereof.

I. It may seem strange to see the Church of Christ this day so universallie brought low, and in a suffering condition, whilst the whole earth besides is at such rest and quiet; that if we now look any where abroad, affliction and contempt from men is seen in a very great measure, to attend the profession of godliness, but more especially the power thereof; yea that almost in everie place the Church would seem to be upon a decay, and a declining rather than in an advance: I confess this may cause great thoughts of heart, when we consider that inestimable value, he whose the Church is hath put thereon, what glorious things are spoken of her in the word, especiallie with a respect to the latter dayes, and we have judged (I humbly think with a safe warrant) that this should be a solemne time of fulfilling these promises, which yet points at a more universal raising and enlargement of the Church of Christ, yea that in so great a measure we have seen some begun performance thereof, and therefore should conclude the Lords work herein cannot halt, untill it be at the full height and at the perfect day; *shall I bring to the birth,*

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and not cause to bring forth saith the Lord; shall I cause to bring forth and shut the womb, saith thy God, *Is. 66. 9.* But let us go in to the Scripture and there enquire concerning this and we will find. 1. How the Church & the world in that interest of their joy and griefe as well as other interests are stated in a most direct opposition. *Joh. 16. 20.* Verily, saith Christ, *ye shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoyce.* It should not be expected these can be at rest together, since the trouble and suffering of the Church, it is a part of the worlds ease and quiet; what a solemn jubilee do's that cause to her adversaries, when they see before them the dead bodies of the witnesses of Christ. *Revelat. 11. ver. 10.* No sight more rejoycing to such, because these are they who torment them who dwell in the earth; but when once the truth casts off her sackcloth, and the witnesses get up to their feet; O what a terroure doth this cause! They are pain'd, yea, their eyes ready to consume in their eye holes with bitternes and anguish, that they have been at so sore work, and done so much against the Church, and yet cannot undoe her. 2. Should this be more strange now then at that time when the city of Shusan and whole seed of the Jews were in perplexity, whilst the King and Haman sat down to feast, and rejoyce over such a threatned ruine; for this seem'd to strike at the root of the Church universal; and was not that a broad and dark cloud when this was write in the Lamentation of the Church, *Zion is a wilderness and Jerusalem a desolation; yea could find no rest, no comforter any where, Lam. 1: ver. 16, 17.* But if such a providence seem strange, that the Church now at this day should be with so violent a spate, and universal a storm run down when so great things are promised, let us consider his way who by the greatest downcasting & straits useth to bring about the most remarkable mercies; and do we not know the Devil appears with greatest wrath, and raiseth the forest storms when he know's that his time is short. 3. If we consult the Scripture, we will find the adversaries of the Church have an hour which is their hour and the power of darkness; for

their sunshine is indeed a black and dark time ; and then is there a strange astonishing concurrence of outward advantages on their side ; for they are thus established for judgment, and the wind must serve, and the tide make until that their work in their hand be fulfilled , they could never have been such a rod on the Church , if they were not appointed of the Lord for the same ; yea , is it not observable, whilst this their hour continues , there is then a power of darkness ; such a time when that hath an unusual force, and would seem to carrie all before it , hath then a marvellous quick dispatch in its spreading from one place to another , to make a dark night , where the Gospel sometimes hath had a bright day , yet we see how such a strange darkness hath but its hour as to the prevalence thereof, even a set time for the Churches trial : and it is such an eclipse , were it never so universal , that must go over at its appointed period , & give place to light , before which the darkness can no longer stand , & then it shall be said to her , who had almost abandoned her selfe to sorrow , *Arise and shine , for thy light is come , and the glory of the Lord is risen.* 4. Why should we be amazed at this , where we may read so clearly something of the Lords designe , even by so sore and universal a stroak to appear in his glory , *Psal. 102. ver. 16.* and thus raise his Church with an unspeakable advantage by such a supposed ruine , the Scripture is in this very manifest , that when the Lord is about some great building , and hath some excellent piece of work to raise up , a great deale of rubbish and breaking downe useth to goe before ; is it not thus also he makes the suffering graces of his Spirit in his people shine forth , that here the faith and patience of the Saints may be witnessed ; yea , should we not know there is in every age a filling up of the sufferings of Christ in his people , and a testimonie thus required to his truth , which the great witness himself did once seale and confirme with his blood , even he who before *Pontius Pilate* gave a good confession , and through all ages even to the close of time , there must not want some witnesses to the same. It is knowne how some times of the Church

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Church are beyond others made remarkable for suffering ; but is it no less clear , that in these times also the truth hath had the greatest victorie , and herein a more special clearing up of some truths which the world hath most studied to darken ; Thus we see some ages of the Church may have a larger part of this testimonie assigned ; Yea , this remarke may not only be of some different lot and service assigned to particular ages but to particular Churches also. 5. If we enquire anent this , at the Scripture we will find also some remarkable proportion that the turning again of the Churches captivitie hath to her former bondage , read *Isai. 49: ver. 19, 20.* and *55: ver. 13.* *Jer. 31: ver. 39.* And you may see what an ample restauration is there , which as with a measuring line is made to answer in breadth and length to her former downecasting ; We find Zions rejoycing when her time of refreshment comes from the presence of the Lord , must reach all her mourners , and be as universal as once the cause of lamentation was , *Isai. 66. ver. 10.* Is it not such an houre sometime with the Church that a refreshing report is now where to be heard , but the tidings of the next day add's more grieve to the former dayes sorrow ; yet hath not such a time quickly followed , wherein the Church might say. *The Lord hath encreased her greatness , and comforted her on every side ;* And hath had a spring and reviving upon the return of the Sun as universal , as her decay and withering once was through the dead winter , *Isai. 51: ver. 3.* And truly , whilst we consider the time in which we are now fallen , how the Church of Christ is every where low , and in a most languishing condition , Antichristianisme now upon a formidable growth , as if there were an universal conspiracie to returne again to Babylon , and if we will enquire hereanent at the Scripture as we see this sad decay we may thence conclude a certaine delivery ; Yea , that even by a day of vengeance the Lord can bring about the year of his redeemed : I humblye thinke we may with a safe Scripture warrand judge , that so universal a decay , such a great overspreading of darkness over the reformed Churches through the whole World may
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give us ground to believe such a breaking up also of the Gospel, and of the knowledge of the Lord, that shall be of as large extent, even to the filling of the earth therewith, as the waters cover the sea; It will not be a particular showre and sunshine of refreshing influences on some Church, It will not be the reviving of the work of God in these nations, I must think, wil answer so broad a cloud, and so universal a vastation and lamentation through the whole Churches of Christ: But we may according to the Scripture look on this as a part of the last and most remarkable assault that the Church universal shall have from Antichrist, before that full stroake on the seat of the beast; Yea, that this is a very promising forerunner thereof, for when this partie seems now to get up, and begins to move war, we have sure ground to believe his further falling thereby, and that every new assault which that grand adversarie makes upon the Church, shall so farr put foreward her interest and hasten his own ruine: Blessed are they who are helped in this dark hour to watch, and wait until the vision break up, for it will assuredly speak in the appointed time.

2. These short breathings of the Church, now under the New Testament, may seem also strange, that we see her sunshine so quickly darkned with clouds and followed with showres, that any lucide interval she enjoys wants not long a new storme, we see this verie clear what hath been the usual lot of the Church universal through all the times of the gospel, how sore tossed and overclouded, her rest of short continuance, and as to particular Churches, is it not a small period of time which useth to be betwixt one assault and another? So that they draw but a little their breath for some new trial: I confels this would be puzzling, if such a piece of divine providence we should essey to unriddle without the Scripture; but we have the word neer us, where we may see the fate and condition of the Church under the Gospel, the most remarkable steps in her way, these sharp assaults and short breathings she was to expect most clearly foretold and held forth;

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yea by consulting this blessed record, we will finde these.

1. That a more continued and fixed rest, then that which may be seen hitherto in the Churches condition could not well be reconciled with the Scripture, there was indeed a great breathing, a most remarkable cessation under Constantines reigne after a storme of some ages continuance; but O how short; and it is said Rev. 8. 1. There was silence in heaven for half an hour; I would here offer some remarks anent the way of the Lord in this. 1. That the crosse and much affliction we finde have a more peculiar respect to the dispensation of the gospel then the times of the law; and this is speciallie suited thereto, to go through many tribulations which is verie consentaneous to a greater manifestation of grace under the New Testament, that greater and more frequent trialls for iss exercise should also be let forth. 2. We finde such sore and usual assaults are not only suted to the most excellent condition of the Church in regard of spiritual priviledges, but doth often trust the most excellent of the saints, read. Heb. 11:32. This remark useth not to faile, how everie particular Church, besides these ordinary changes and tossings in her lot, hath also some more solemne remarkable trialls and some great assault beyond others, and accordingly hath some more singular breathings and sun-blinks suited thereto. 4. We cannot finde any such calme and breathing, which hath not been verie short if we turn back and trace the historie of the Church in former times, but the clouds have returned quickly after the raine; yea, we may observe how the most excellent Princes and Magistrats under whom the Church hath had some sweet repose have been oft in a verie short time taken away, and have but lived a few years. 2. If we wonder at such a piece of the Lords way, why his Church is thus tossed, doth not the Scripture shew what need she hath to be emptied from vessel to vessel, a long calme being no less her hazard than a sharp storme, and more cause oft to watch over her outward rest, then weep over her trouble and tossings: Oh how oft hath the Church lost more by a
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few years peace then a long continued war; yea the necessity of a sharp winter for her recoverie hath been so discernable ere it came, that if it were not for the downbearing of truth, and shaking of the faith of the saints, the continuance thereof might be almost wished as her advantage; let be to be quietly submitted unto. 3. Doth not the Scripture also witness that continued lasting quarrel, which is betwixt the world and the Church, and is perpetuat from generation to generation that time cannot wear out; so that if she had not so great a partie for her, and an immediat support from heaven, we might find more cause to wonder the yet breaths, then to ask why her breathings are so short when there is so great a power against her? O if the Church had not this to answer all the messengers of the nations anent her securitie, *That the Lord hath founded Zion*, sure that long breathing designe for so many ages should at last have taken place, even to the razing of her foundation. 4. It is clear the most singular fellowship, and free accessse thereinto, with Jesus Christ on the earth, is by the cross, and in that way witnessed, that it must be said, if such afflicting times did not oft return upon his people there would be a shut door betwixt the Church, and a large part of the Bible, both as to its meaning, and as to its full breasts of consolation; are there not most sweet refreshing truths there, with which the godly cannot reach so neer, feeling a converse with in an outward calme as under some sharpest wrestlings: O what an excellent commentar hath a suffering time given upon these, beyond all that ever was written, on such a truth of the Scripture, *Persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed, as sorrowful, yet alwayes rejoycing*; and thus, we see how in our stumbling at such a providence we are not knowing the Scripture, and mistakes our own mercie. 5. Whilst we see these short intervals which have so usually been under the New Testament, betwixt one trial of the Church and another, and the cause thereof so clear from the word; let us also consider what warrand there is yet to expect before the end a more solemne and remarkable time of the Churches enlargement, that not only

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shall be verie universal in its extent; but a more lasting and continued rest from the violence of the world then hath formerly been, which I humbly judge on clear Scripture grounds we are to believe upon the coming of that full stroak on Babilon, and these solemne espousals of the Jewish Church to Christ which seems to be the most remarkable period, of that time appointed for the Churches reigne; and though this will not want some sharp trials, and a mixture of outward trouble, yet, we find no ground from the Scripture after the discussing of Antichrist and the throwing down of the Turkish empire, for any remarkable interruption and overclouding, or that the Church shall have any great assault until that finall gathering of the world and her forces together to the last battel of the Lamb.

3. Is not this a strange remark likewise, which is so usual a complaint through the Church, that with a greater increase of light and knowledge, there is seen a visible wearing out of life and power, and now in these more knowing times, there should be so much ground to say, tendernes and the serious exercise of godliness is more worne out, and in a further decay, then in the times of greater ignorance: let us but look through the reformed Churches at this day and then turne home to our selves, and we will find this remark too sadly verified; how after a great increase of knowledge, the truths of God in such a measure cleared beyond former ages, it may be said Oh whether is the life and power of godliness gone, and that fervour which once so convincingly appeared in following the Lord? Wee know there is a sweet agreement betwixt the Christians light and life, which hath a mutual subseruency to each other, and yet to see so sad a jarr this day, and so little proportion, the one hath to the other, may put us with astonishment to a serious inquiry thereanent; but the scripture is clear and makes it plain, if we will consider. 1. That there is a time of a peoples espousals to the Lord, and then the kindnes of their youth and a remarkable time of love is seen. *Jer. 21. 2.* When their affection will be aloft after him; yea, such a solemne period of the Churches

Churches condition may be seen when it hath not reached that light and knowledge, as after; but doe we not also find how rare it is for a people, to hold up at that rare & measure in their life and love, which at such times hath appeared, whatever advance there may be as to light; thence we find the Churches holding up with the name and profession of godliness *Rev. 3. 2.* when very sore spent in her life; yea, this decay oft upon such an unsensible growth that it will be hard to get such convinced thereof and remember whence they are fallen. 2. If we will ask at the scripture, it will also shew that judicial tendency which light not improven hath to a further hardening; how under the gospel men may be made deaf with hearing, for judgment am I come in the world, sayth Christ, *Joh. 9. 39.* which hath that effect, that these who see should be made blind; light is surely one of the greatest talents of the Church, and brings with it either a remarkable gain, or lose; nothing so dreadful as this when it is abused; O what a rate doth it run down, and stupifie the conscience! that thus men are not only more deadened, but becomes the more dead and blind that they were once enlightned. 3. May we not thence know how this is one of the Devils greatest engines he makes use of to turne mens light against their life and tenderness, even to incite them from that excellent discovery of the grace of God unto wantonness. *Jud. 4.* and thus essay an agreement betwixt light and darkness; O what a dreadful poyson must that be! which can imbitter so excellent a streame, and turn so choyle and quickening a mean of our spiritual life to be destructive thereto: that we see knowledge, whose true and native tendency is to humble and abase, being thus impoysoned do's work the contrare effect, even to swell men and puff them up; to oppose these gifts against the Church which are given of the Lord for its edification, and for defence of the gospel; thus we find it clear, when light hath made a further advance in the Church, the Devil is there at work to destroy love, by many bitter contentious debates, where the interest may be oft seen more personal, to wit their

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repute and cr  dite, then the interest of God and his truth : I am farr from any intended reflection on that grave and necessary duty of appearing in defence of the truth, and mens stating themselves in opposition to these who are its adversaries, a quarrel wherein they should know neither friend nor brother for this is to stand in the breach when it is assaulted, to contend for the faith ; O blessed contention where such with that excellent man Melancthon can say *Non quaero gloriam propriam, sed veritatem.* 4. Though this is a very sad and threatening symptome that night is coming on a Church where the light shines, but the heat and warming influence thereof is gone ; yet here is a riddle, we find the Scripture do's wonderfully unfold, how the Lord makes things bring forth contrare effects, and cause a remarkable consumption, that seems to reach the Church in her inward & vital parts, resolve in an overflowing with righteousness *Is.* 10. v. 22. yea, thus lets us see a people so far spent in life and spiritualitie, that the things which remain are ready to dye, whilst even there, the Lord is pursuing their recoverie : It is herein he makes his grace marvelous to tryst his peoples raising with so low a step of their condition, and cause his Church when brought to a small remnant take root downward, and bring forth fruit upward. *Is.* 37. 31. It would seem a strange connection, but not strange to the grace of God. *Is.* 102. that the time of his favouring Zion, even that set time should finde her in a heap of stones and rubbish ; yea, that a reviving and the breaking up of her day begins there with the weeping of her friends over her ruins : I shall further adde, with respect to the present time, we may believe on very sure grounds that godliness and the power thereof will yet break up in the world, though it were at the lowest ebb, yea, as at its last breathing ; that little spunk now under ashes must assuredly revive and blow up to a flame, yea, send forth its heat to warme the nations ; for on solid grounds we may thus reason, if such a death-like decay had a respect only to some particular Church, and if this withering abatement, and

languishing of the exercise of grace were confined but to a corner, it might be a sad preface that their sun, when so far declined and gone downe were neer to the setting; but since this seems to be a consumption over the whole earth, a matter of lamentation and a spreading complaint, through the whole reformed Church, we may look on it as a very promising ground of confidence and hope of a recovery; for if that be sure the Church universal cannot die under such a disease, it is also sure this sickness is not unto death; yea so remarkable an opposition to the power of godliness as is this day through the world; we may judge a verie refreshing preface of some more universal upbreking of the same, wherein God will be seen by some blessed surprisal in a verie immediat way; for there is hope of this tree, which in a special way he had himself planted, that it shall grow though now cut downe, by the sent of waters, even by the river the streams whereof makes glade the citie of God; which can in old age cause her to bring forth fruit: O what life is there in the Church of Christ when it seems to be buried! for she is in the root that cannot dry up, & herein must his promise & his peoples praise meet, that her dry bones shall flourish as a green herb; there can be now no less appearance of this then at that time when the Lord turned again the captivity of his people, which was so little expected. Ps. 126. that they knew not whether it was a dream or real: It may indeed be a very humbling discovery, that we must say, our ruine is of our selves; yet must it not ruine our hope, since in these great things which the Lord hath done for the Church, the greatness of his power hath not been more clearly witnessed, then the freedome & sovereignty of his grace, that men may see, this is the Lords doing, & should be marvellous in their eyes.

4. May it not seem strange, and be matter of astonishment, that the greatmen of the earth, and such who sit in the place of judgment are usually found to be greatest adversaries to the Church; yea, it is too well known that magistracy (so excellent an ordinance of God) hath been so

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far perverted that even under the Christian Magistrate the Church of Christ hath suffered more since first breaking up then from any other airth, this indeed may seem marvelous; I do not deny there have been great men in the world, who have no less outshined others in fervour and zeal for the truth, then in their place and quality, But oh we may say an age brings forth few such, and that which Salvian says of his time, hath been a true remark in most ages of the world, and too frequently seen, that the contempt upon religion by these who were in greatest power had this effect, *Ut mali cogantur esse, ne viles habeantur*: I confess this may cause wonder, if we consider for what end the great Lawgiver hath designed that ordinance, how men should so far counteract his interest, from whom they derive their power, & for being subservient thereto have received it: sure the doctrine of the Church of Christ can give no ground of quarrel; and its strange these should expect from others homage and subjection who turns the seat of judgment to be a grievous yoke & denies their subjection so avowedly to the great judge: O how sad is it that none are oft such a terrour to the godly, such a support to evil doers, as Magistrats, and the great men of the world so usually found to be the greatest examples of wickedness; this should indeed be matter of lamentation, yea, that these are oft times advanced, who have nothing to commend them but some advance beyond others in a higher measure of impietie: but we must goe to the Scripture and there enquire which will shew. 1. That it is not strange though iniquitie have a throne under whose shadow mischief may not only shelter but come that length to be fram'd into a law. Ps. 94:20. yea, it must not be strange, that the adversaries of the truth be among the chief of the time; which complaint we find Lam. 1. 5. The world is not yet cured of that madness of which the Prophet speaks with amazment Ps. 2. 1. why the Kings and rulers of the earth should attempt a vain thing to ruine the Church, and make his decree void, who by his word created the world, we may see it is not of late the servants of Christ have been conveened

before rulers in defence of the truth, and have suffered by the law, where the crime was, their adherence to the express command of the great law-giver. *Luk. 21. 12.* It is also clear the Kings of the earth for many ages have amidst all their private differences with one consent agreed to make war with the lamb, and give their strength for upholding Antichrist, yet is this nothing else, but what the Scripture hath foretold. *Rev. 17.* It was written of an excellent man in the dayes of Phocas that after some humble expostulating with the Lord, why he set up so vile a wretch in the highest place of power, that he had this returne *quia non inveni peiorem*: Herein is the way of the Lord unspotted, how sad so ever it be in it self, that these who should execute judgment for the oppressed are in his holy displeasure made the executioners of his judgments on men, and shew themselves the greatest oppressours. 2. If this be strange to us, do's not the Scripture prevent our stumbling by a most sweet and choise antidote, that when we see the oppression of the poor, and such a wrathfull aspect rulers usuallie have on the Church of God, we should not marvell or be much moved thereat, even when we see these whom death hath pluckt away, and with shame rolled in the grave, still returne with the same resemblance in their successors, and pietie in all ages run down by power, for it is written, that he who is higher then the highest doth regard the same *Ecl. 5. 8.* O how far are they below God, yea, infinitely below him who are highest among men, hath not their violence and oppression of the Church him for a witness, whom they must also have for a judge? And the further they seem raised above humane reach, they ly more neer to some immediat stroak of a divine hand; that when there is no reprover on earth, none there to give their cruelty against the Church a check, he sits in heaven who laughs them to scorne, which they shall finde to be sad earnest, when he speaks to them in his wrath and vexes them in his sore displeasure. 3. Do's not the Scripture witness the Lords blessed designe in this to make his Church thrive another way when she is destitute of the help and countenance of

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civill authoritie, and thus lead her in to him, who hath the key of David, that opens and none can shut, unto him who is a known refuge for the oppressed; it is here he declares himself to be God, and the greatness of his power who can keep her alive, and preserve his interest in a destroying flame, and under a cruel oppressing Magistrate, yea, thus cause her flourish in his dayes, and have peace in his reigne, even under the grievous reigne of her adversaries: doe we not likewise find *Neh. 9:36*. The Churches distress there and oppression from her rulers makes them resolve in a more neer ty and conjunction with God, which is seen in the last verse, *And because of this we make a sure covenant, &c.* O blessed violence and oppression! that stands here, where the storme drives to such an anker as a further cleaving to the Lord, and surrender of themselves to him. 4. As the Scripture prevents mens stumbling at this ordinarie suffering of the Church under Magistracie, it do's also witness the Lords contending verie remarkable against these on such an account, and clearly sheweth, that no humane greatnes can secure from him who cuts off the spirit of Princes, and is terrible to the Kings of the earth; consider *Pf. 2. 9.* and *93. 4.* It is here we may read the cause of the changes of Kingdomes and states that are so frequent in the world, whatever influence personal interests seem to have, there is a holy revenging God, and his arme made bare therein upon the quarrel of his Church, that he may recompense tribulation to these who have troubled her; none needs wonder that flourishing states are broken in such a quarrel, to see the supreme head of the Church, (that in all things he may have the preheminance) wound the head over many countreys, and rule the nations with an iron rod, yea, turn great men out of their grandour and authoritie, and throw them down, for the cause is obvious, they keep no bounds and marches with the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, but will be over and invade his interest, untill he who must reigne, and have all dominion and power subjected to him carrie that warre back upon themselves, and stand up against such evill neighbours, for his

own right, for which he will strike thorough Kings in the day of his wrath, yea pursue the race & seed of such oppressors, the father & the children, as a standing quarrel from generation to generation. 5. It is sure corrupt Magistracy is one of the great plagues of God on the world; wherein his unspotted righteousness and the provoking cause from men, may be seen in the Scripture, that when such will throw off his yoke, and quarrel with his authority in subjection to which their libertie lyes, they should have one more grievous and unsufferable wreathed on them, and be delivered up to the hands of such cruell exactors; I must here say the Lord do's visibly contend by such a stroake with that excessive flattery and respect the nations gives their rulers, that blind obedience they give contrary to the expresse will of the Law giver, by a willing following of the commandment, and thus writes that sin on their judgment, that the hand of men should be heavie and sore on their own interests who can so easily comply with their oppression of the Church and invading the interests of God: but here is no intended reflection on that divine ordinance of Magistracy, whereon his image is so visibly impressed, though in all ages there hath been sad cause to bewaile the abuse of so great a trust and power, and to see it so destructive to the end for which it is designed.

3. This also seems strange and is a very shaking thing, to see some of greatest repute and eminency in the Church, who have been singularly useful to engage others in the way of the Lord change their principles with the time, and turne at last in opposition thereto, yea make it their work to cast down what once with great zeal they seemed to build; I confess this may give sad ground of stumbling, and nothing Atheisme takes more advantage of to question the truth of all Religion, if there be any thing further, than a humane interest in it, when mens light in the matters of God, and the doctrine of Ministers are found so cross to themselves with the changes of the time: blessed are they who are not offended at Christ because of this;

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but let us consult the Scripture and then instead of being shaken or strangled we will find this such a special confirmation of the truth, that if it were not thus men might rather question the same; for, 1. Such a shaking trial is clearly foretold from crosse tides of doctrine, that should be within the Church. *Eph. 4: 14.* yea, a warning given of these who handles the word deceitfully, *2 Cor. 4. v. 2.* by accommodating it to their privat interest and designe and a corrupt application thereof; for when men do once establish the conclusion before the premisses for compliance with a sinful course, they are then at work to wrest the Scripture by misapplying it. *2 Pet. 3.* which is indeed to oppose the truth against it selfe, and sute it to their byasse; that they may salve such a visible opposition betwixt them and themselves in their way and praftice; and thus whatever fair shew they make in the flesh, they expose the word and their parts and abilities in handling of it to sale (O an accursed sale and merchandize) Now if this seem strange and be stumbling, that amongst the dispensers of the mysteries of God, and of greatest repute in the Church, such should be found, read *2. Cor. 2. 17.* And yow will there see the cause why many corrupts the word, because they are not in sinceritie and as in the sight of God therein, which is absolutely required to qualify a faithful Minister of Christ: Oh! The want of that candor and uprightness of heart is a worme which lyes hid at the root of all their other parts, and as a dead corrupting fly is so excellent a box of oyntment; thus we may see this is so far from being a cause of stumbling at the truth, that it do's most convincingly fullfil and verifie the same. 2. When we have so sad a discovery in the Church have we not this antidote likewise from the Scripture, not to be shaken or moved thereat. *Heb. 13. 9.* But that we studie to know and be perswaded of the truth that may quiet and support the soul, though we should be left alone in following duty, the testimony of God is sure and immovable, and he is true, though all men should be liars, we must have the persons of none in admiration, which hath so usual

a tendency to bribe the judgment and betray the truth; but though an Apostle or an Angel from heaven should come to oppose the Scripture of God we ought in so far say, let him be accursed. 3. Here also is the holy counsel and designe of the Lord made known that these who are approved may be made manifest, and such have an opportunity to discover themselves, who turne aside to crooked paths, and tread in the dark to the prejudice of the truth. *Pj. 125. 5.* They may dig very deep to hide their opposition to God, not only from others; but even from themselves; but providence herein hath a deeper reach & ensnares them in the work of their owne hands; yea, doth thus bring forth with the workers of iniquity, and as his greatest adversaries, who wound and betray his interest under that mask, and disguise of a friend; this is indeed a preventing mercy to the Church whose hurt and hazard hath been more from these who walk under a cover then any other party; and here is the counsel of the Lord shew'd, that when a piercing trial comes which will go thorow the soul like a sword, the thoughts of many hearts may be then discovered, there is a falling in of many with the Church under a calme, who must fall off with a storme, it is strange to think how small the first entry of a further declining will be when once there is a tendency & byass that way, how hard is it to joyn in a familiar correspondence with the adversaries of the truth without joyning in some measure with their way; yea, it is seen these usually are more ensnared, then the adverse party by any such tampering are bettered; It is a sad truth which is said of Ephraim, strangers devoured his strength, yet he knew it not. *Hof. 7. 8.* It is no wonder when men come the length of detaining the truth in unrighteousness, and withstand the giving of a testimony thereto when called, that the next step be, some appearance against it. 4. Is it not clear from the Scripture that the righteous God, doth thus rain snares on men? yea, this is one of the woes the world is under because of offences; for the fall and turning aside of such is a sad stroak on others, whilst

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whilst they use not to fall alone, when these become a stumbling block, whose lips should preserve knowledge, whom the people are to consult concerning the law, and thus be the greatest cause of offence themselves whose work is to strengthen, and confirme others; O what a fore plague is this on a poor Church, when it is low, to break her further, and make her distemper grow; we may truly say it is more theatning then sword, famine or pestilence against a nation; It is a strange ground which is given of the departure of these from the faith who were once in repute of the Church, yea, of the breaking up of Antichrist in the world 2 *Thef.* 2. 12. that it was to punish them who believed not the truth, and would not embrace the same; O it is a sad and dreadful time to live in, where such offences abound! for it clearly shews a judicially plaguing time, upon the Church and some great abuse of the Gospel which hath gone before.

5. When this seems strange to us, should we not learn to adore & justify him, who thus stains the pride of all flesh & will silence the confidence or boasting of instruments, that the Church may know where her strength ly's; this is a remarke though sad which seldome fails, that the greatest enduements & gifts, where men are swell'd & lift up themselves with have a more easie & native byasse against the truth then for it, & threatens the Churches hazard more than any advantage the exercise of these gifts can promise; & the greater repute men walk under, where humility keeps not low, layes them the more neer some humbling stroak to bring them low, ere they go off the stage, that no flesh may glory in his presence, 1 *Cor.* 13. 26. We must say the greatest *Hero's* in the Church of Christ, who have shined, even to their setting most brightly, have been also the most humble. 6. As it is clear there is no jarr betwixt the Scripture and this, but it is so great a confirmation thereof, that should further strengthen and establish us in the way of the Lord, for the falling off of such from the truth is a trial most expressly foretold, & a convincing witnes to the truth of the Scripture; so this also must be granted that

there are Ministers and watchmen in the Church of Christ in all ages found faithful to their Masters interest, who have been not only helped to confess the truth, and deliver the counsel of God to the World, but to witness their adherence to and perswasion of it by suffering: O can the World debate this that such in the worst of times are found to drive a treaty of reconciliation betwixt Christ and sinners, who are in earnest, and have a weight of that work on them without respect to outward encouragement; O happy Servants of so great a Master, who considers that they shine with borrowed light and derives all from him whether as to grace or gifts, that therein they may returne to him again, by a faithful improvement of their talent; who reckons they cannot be low where he is exalted, they cannot lose where the gain is his, but in this doth rejoyce to see him increase and his Kingdom on an advance, though they decrease and be darkened with the brightness of his rising.

6. I know this is an astonishing thing, which many pretend a cause for stumbling, to see how some have walked, and at what a rate under a profession of godliness, and for so long a time have had the appearance of being serious and tender, yea, have thus personated the walk of a Christian, whom an after-discovery hath proved not in some particular only, but in the main interest of religion to be without reality and truth; this may indeed seem strange and be cause of wonder that men having the use of reason should be at so sore a toil, to hold up a forme of godliness and the external exercise of Christian duties only for a forme, who might with an other kinde of facilitie & unspeakable pleasure have reached both the shadow and the substance by being serious, and it is sure, if such get not the impression of a Deity razed out of the soul (which is impossible) there must be some time terror in their approach to God, though not in any secret retirements, (for this should be a piece of their torment to come so neer their conscience, & be alone with it, lest it see in their face) yet with others, when such a witness they have within, that it is their deliberate

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work to deceive at once, the great God, their generation, and their own soul, but oh this is not more strange then true, yea, many such pretenders are, and will be within the pale of the visible Church, and is there not a divine hand marvelously oft seen in renting that vail and bringing these forth to the light, in such a way as may witness this is from the Lord; now there is no ground of challenge or reflection here on his holy and unspotted way or the reality of godliness, if we will but seriously enquire at the Scripture where we have this. 1. Expressly foretold, that men should have a forme of godliness and deny the power thereof. *1 Tim. 3:5.* profess to know God, being abominable disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. *Tis. 1. last. ver.* Yea, will come in sheeps clothing yet be ravenous wolves, have not some of the Churches sharpest trialls been in such a way ushered in, even under a false shew, and have not the most cruel persecuters entered the stage as friends? You know how the man of sin did first step in, was he not thus masked? And is not the Scripture clear, that to seek a Church free of such a mixture out of heaven, is to seek that which we will never finde, for it is there only, no unclean thing can enter. 2. Do's not this blessed record of the scripture shew with what singular art and advantage such may act that part and with Jehu enquire, if the mans heart be right whilst his own is most false, what a strange confidence will these have who glories in appearance and not in heart? Will they not cry unto God & make mention of him but not in truth. *Is. 48.* Yea, should we wonder, though such be found who can maske their private interest with such an appearance, even whilst they seek a rule for their religion out of Matchiavel, but not out of the Bible. 3. If the length that these may come seem strange, will you consult the Scripture which goes as great a length in its discoverie and you will know how deep it works, sometimes not at an ordinary rate but they will invite the world to see their zeal for God, who dare not endure the view of their own conscience, therein you may finde an Apostle and one of the twelve and yet a Devil, to witness
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this should be no reflection on the Church of Christ, though an eminent Minister thereof be found rotten and unsound who hath made a great shew in the flesh. 4. Do's the Scripture allow, or flatter any in such a way? you cannot there have one line for its encouragement; but whilst humane law do's not reach this, divine Law most severely threatnes, *Job. 8. v. 13 &c. Math. 7: ver. 15 &c.* And then you may see it in its own colour, how horrid a thing it is which the more neer it do's approach Religion, (that is so excellent and lovely in it self) this false shew thereof is the more hateful and loathsome; Yea, even these who comply's with it in themselves are made to loath it in others, which is in the highest measure a falshood and lye, because a lying to the God of truth. 5. You cannot challenge the Church and followers of Jesus Christ, that by them any such thing is owned or justified, but it may be seen, what an offence and wound such a discoverie will prove, to these; It is indeed a cause of griefe, but no cause of reflection on the truth of God, for in so far this is verified, they went out from us, because they were not of us, *1 Job. 2:29.* 6. Is not that horrid and black roll mention'd by the Apostle, *1 Tim. 2. vers 3.* claspt as it were betwixt these two, a forme of godlines, but denying the power thereof: It is not strange when Religion is attended with much power in a place, that hypocrisie is found there also; but it is clear what remarkable discoveries have been made thereof, that feldome such who have most industriously studied that accursed art have gone to the grave under this cover, though I deny not but some may. I must further adde that some special incitement and concurrence of the devill is here oft very manifest and his power as remarkably put forth as in any lust of the flesh to put some foreward on such a designe; yea, even may be subservient to them in the exercise of common gifts, that may deceive for the time very discerning Christians; I cannot question the truth of this, having ground to instance such, who have been in an expresse covenant with Satan, and have after acknowledged his help & assistance, for their dexterous managing so dreadful a designe;

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signe; if yow think this strange, yow would consider that the devil, himself is transformed to an Angel of light, but it is well, the grossest defilement of men can no wayes stain Religion & the way of the Lord which is pure and undefiled.

7. These sad jars and divisions which are so frequent in the Church of Christ may seem very strange, and be cause of stumbling and offence to many, that whilst the World is at such an agreement, and of one minde to oppose the truth, these are oft found at warr, most bitterly contending amongst themselves, even these who should stand in the breach for the truth & in defence of the Gospel, the fellow servants at strife & smiting one another when they should be striving together about their Masters work; I confesse this is sad, and is a rock whereon many have split, of which they have made that use to a further heightening of their prejudice against the truth; Yea, it is strange that this destroying plague doth so observably attend any peace, or calme: that the Church hath, in her outward condition; but there is no cause for such stumbling if we will allow it some serious thoughts, it may rather help to fix and establish us in the way of the Lord, and in stead of being a poissone, may be an effectual antidote against the same, I mean the Atheisme of the time which pretends so great an advantage from this, for the Scripture is clear. 1. Though it is a sore stroake on the Church, and the most sad departure of God from a People which we have upon divine record, we finde usually tryft them in such a torne and divided case, yea, though in all the records of after times, this may be traced in the breaking up of a judgment as a very immediat forerunner thereof, yet, have we no warrand to expect the Church militant shall be in that condition in which there shall be no such discord and breach, no, that is heaven, and it is there only perfect peace and concord will be found; read, 1 Cor. 1. ver. 10. Rom. 15: ver. 5. and what an early trial was this to the Church which did occasion that grave and solemn meeting of the Apostles and Elders, Act. 15. to let us see, how the Lord can serve himself of the greatest evil for the advantage of his truth.

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2. There is no cause of challenge here or reflecting on the truth, whatever be on these who profess it, since the Scripture shews we know but in part and Prophecie in part and such a prevailing mixture of corruption, that some will preach Christ out of strife and contention not sincerely. *Phil. 1: ver. 15.* Yea, whilst there are such different syles amongst the Saints, that these who eat not, are ready to judge them who eat, and these who eat, are ready to despise him who eateth not. 3. If we consult the Scripture, we will finde that peace and concord within the Church which is so excellent in it self and desirable must be severely qualified with a respect to holiness. *Hebr. 12: ver. 14.* for else such an agreement would not be the true peace of the Church, but her plague; and is not that wisdom which is from above first pure and then peaceable? It is sure, they are its best friends who have least latitude to take or give in the interest of truth; but it is oft found, how such indirect tamperings for peace, have in the judgment of the Lord caused a further breach; there is no true part betwixt the zeal of God, and an ardent desire and endeavour for peace, but what our corruption causeth; O this is a blest peace maker, who can goe the furthest length to yeeld in his own things, whether credit or private interest, yea, overlook the most sharp personal reflections to promote that excellent designe; but hath nothing to yeeld or quite upon his Masters interests, and can resist whosoever they be that would prejudge this, even to their face; have we not that Heroik practice of the Apostle, *Gal. 2: v. 3.* upon divine record to this day, *to whom we gave place, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.* Is not that also a special remark that these who cause division in the Church, & were therefore to be noted *Rom. 16: 17.* it was these, who did oppose the doctrine of the Church, for it is mens falling off from the truth, which is indeed the cause of a schisme and rent, but not their adherence to it, though for this they should be men of contention, and look't on as signes and wonders in the time. 4. Whatever advantage some may take to challenge the

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way of the Lord, from these breaches, I am sure they cannot deny, there is a fellowship and concord in the Church of Christ beyond any in the world, there is a communion of the saints, even here, with one heart and minde, yea, in such a measure as may shew the world, this is a bond that exceeds the most neer and strait ties of naturall relations. *Eph. 4. ver. 3. 16.* and truly every jarr and difference amongst the followers of Christ, makes not a breach.

8: I know that this will seem strange and astonishing in the way of the Lord, that when the Church from her adversaries without is oppressed and brought low, his hand in a very immediat way also is so heavie, yea, seems more sore upon his people, then the hand of men, and do's even by some sad strokes in their privat interests, and upon their persons appear more remarkably against them, then against any others; this may occasion great thoughts of heart. when we consider that tendernes which the Lord doth witness towards his people, that he stirs not up all his wrath, nor will lay upon them above that they can bear, but stayes his rough wind in the day of the east wind, and hath promised to be a sanctuarie, and hiding place when they are scatted by men: *Ezek. 11. ver. 16.* and with another partie the Church might debate, yea, hold her own, with her greatest adversaries; But oh! it is time to flee and there can be no standing, where the Almighty pursues; there is then true cause of fear and terrour when he becomes his people partie; But let us consult the Scripture that great interpreter of providence, and of everie step of the way and procedure of the Lord with his Church, and it will let us see. 1. That it is no strange case, or untroden path, but we may find the Prophet *Jer. 17. 17.* at such a grievous cry, *be not a terrour to me, shew not my hope in the evill day,* and had not the Church the same cause of complaint *Jer. 30; 14. 16.* *that the Lord seem'd to wound her with the wound of an enemy and the stroke of a cruel one;* It was the appearance of this, that was a very sad addition to her trial beyond any other thing *Is. 63. 10.*
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that they found the Lord turn'd to be their enemy, and in an immediat way seem to fight against them. 2. Do not the Scripture shew that the rod may have a dreadful appearance, and the way of the Lord by some strange and singular circumstances in dealing with his people may be matter of amazement, when he designs a further increase of their grace, yea, their trial more then their punishment; this is indeed one of the deeps of providence, which we have discovered *Job* 1. 2. Chapters, how by a divine permission Satan may verie effectually concur in a stroke on the Church, or some particular Christian, and thus cause a strange concurrence of imbittering things, that in such a case the hand of the Lord would seem verie terrible, whilst he only mindes his peoples trial, and it is clear that the same trial mentioned by the Apostle *1 Pet.* 4:12. may have such strange, and singular circumstances, that the godly will be at a question if such did ever befall others, and yet you see it there held forth more as a ground of joy then of fear; O how deep in afflicting times of the Church may the plot and contrivance of the devil be! which in the holy counsell of the Lord is oft forced to run against its own be-asse, and to bring forth the verie contraire effect. 3. If we understand the Scripture, we may there know, how the trials of the Church hath its appointed bounds and measure, yea, by some remarkable steps will grow that length, and have such an advance until it surround them on all hands. *Lam.* 2. 22. *Thou hast called my terrors round about, as in a solemne day;* yet, when it is so, we finde it is not without cause, but may be needfull for the Church and particular Christians to be in heaviness through manifold temptations. *1 Pet.* 1. 6. and truly in such an unusual tryft and varietie of straits, the tendence thereof is oft seen for as manifold use and advantage, as the many afflicting ingredients in that trial have been remarkable. 4. Wee may also see from the Scripture what an usual resemblance there is betwixt the publick lot of the Church in suffering times, and the privat case of the saints, how under some sad trial and departure of the Lord from his people, his dispensations

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are many wayes corrective and judicial, that doth then reach them in all their personal interests; there is a backsliding time, and a day when judgment particularly points at the green tree which useth not to be a comforting time, that then Satan is more observably let loose to afflict, and few will misse some touch of his hand, read *Lam. 1. 2.* where you find *the sword abroad devouring*, a time of publick judgment, and then it was *as home also as death*, and in the *16. v.* under such sore afflicting stroks there is one further held forth, that was most imbittering of all to the godly in that time, *the comforter who should relieve their soul was farr off*; It is clear nothing do's more endear a mercie and make it sweet then the Lords immediat appearance therein; and nothing do's more imbitter the rod, which put David to that cry *Pf. 39. remove that strok from me, I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.* 5. Upon a serious inquirie anent this strange thing, may we not understand the meaning thereof by the Scripture, why in some trials the Lord do's thus shew himself his peoples partie, and his hand more heavie on them then on others, that there is some provoking cause whereat these providences clearly point; when the godly are pursuing their ease and satisfaction under the rod, more then to answer its designe, when they are ready to take mortification and a humble stouping under trouble for a couching underneath their burden, it is not then strange though that sad wo, *Amos 6. v. 6.* do so farr reach them as their personal ease makes them forget the affliction of Joseph: for thus the righteous God sutes their stroke to the sin, & keeps such a proportion that a light burden of the care of the Church should make their care otherwayes abound, and in their own things presse them with much trouble, when these goe betwixt them and the interest of Christ, there is a very unseen cause oft why many of the saints may be sick and some falling asleep, yea, this truth must be likewise verifed; there is a saving of things by which we put them in further hazard and a securing thereof by a surrender to the Lord, "an immoderat fear of a strok from men to the pre-

judice of present and necessary dutie, may bring with it some sad immediat strokes in the displeasure of the Lord from his hand; yea, that he should thus bereave his Church of many choyest instruments by his verie immediat hand, to make it appear the anger and jealousie of the most high God, is more to be dreaded, then the wrath and violence of all our adversaries: But yet in the close of these judgments even when a Church may seem quite consumed, and her strength worn out, have we not there some ground of hope that the Lord may prevent his peoples thoughts by as marvelous, as immediat restoring providences, when he sees their power is gone, and that there is none to help; yea, is it not easie with him and like his way, to return and restore what the former years have taken away, by the locust and caterpillar, &c. which he had sent amongst them, *Joel 2. 25.*

9. There is a step of the holy providence of God and his unspotted judgment, which would also seem strange and amazing, that which is inflicted upon the soul and conscience by an immediat strok of judicial induration, and is verie evident; Oh how undeniably evident, and clear at this day! that men under great light, some special discoveries of God, after known convictions and wrestlings of conscience, yea, after solemne engagements and their declared resolution to follow the Lord in his way have yet come such a length and degree in a deliberat resisting and opposing themselves to him and his truth without the least appearance of a check or trouble: I confess this is one of the marvelous things of God, and a verie visible demonstration of his being, who hath such a dominion over the soul, both in its hardning and softening; But no cause to stumble hereat, it do's truly cal us to fear, and is a stroke that may force on Atheists the awfull conviction of a Deity; or though it is not felt by these who are under the same, because the want of sense and feeling is a part of that disease, yet all who look on (if they did not shut their own eyes) may learn to know this is the verie work of God, and a piece of his judgment which he makes known in the earth;

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But let us aske the Scripture & we shall finde in stead of any ground for stumbling what a special confirmation this should be of the truth since it is clear.

1. How in this the way of the Lord is holy and righteous, who is under no debt, no obligation to the sons of men. *Rom. 9. 18.* but is absolutely free to let forth grace to, or withhold from whom he pleaseth; his blessed will being the alone rule of righteousness, he comprehends the reason of all his counsel and judgments which are to us incomprehensible, yet do's he so farre condescend to let men see his unspotted justice aswell as his Sovereignitie in this shines forth; that they who are unjust by a deliberat choise should be unjust stil by a further areast *Rev. 22.* and these who will not hearken; and wil have none of him should be deliverd up to the lusts of their own heart. *Pf. 81: 11.* we see in what a measure Pharaoh was hardened of the Lord, which was a plague worse then the other ten; But we find *Exo. 6. 34.* that Pharaoh hardened his own heart, and thus was a stroke sared to such a resolute resisting of light. 2. Do's not the Scripture shew the marvellous convoy of this judgment *Jf. 6. 6.* how this sad sentence is immediatly passed on the soul; yea, by these most singular means, the word and ordinances for enlivening, is execute thereon; men preached deaf and dead, where others find life; this is a stroke; that do's not draw a barr betwixt them, and external fellowship with the ordinances; But O it draws an invisable barr betwixt them and the power and efficacie thereof; it is a judgment that walks in the dark, and binds where none can loose, it killeth without a cry; yea gives men a death stroke, when the pain of that wound is not felt. 3. Do you not see how this strange judgment is in as great a height & measure held forth by the Scripture as yow see it in any example before your eyes, that men will be mad in their opposition to God, even when he is most remarkablie opposing them, such as Ahaz who did trespassse the more; the more he was distressed, *2 Chro. 28. 22.* Yea, such who with these men of Sodome would grope after the door, & persist in that wickednes when God hath immed-

diatly smitten them with blindness for the same: O what may be the next stroke, where men renew their assault against God after he hath once and again smitten them, who in stead of repenting under his sore plagues turns enraged to blaspheme him, who hath power over the same: is not that a strange degree of judicial induration. *Act. 7. 57.* that when they saw the face of Stephen shine, and looked stedfastly thereon they did then run with furie against him; Yea, it may be seen in all ages that such a length this judgment will come to look on the most convincing extraordinarie judgments of God on others, and yet not be moved therewith themselves, that when his hand is lifted up they will not see, but the posterity take up the same quarrel & pursue it wherein they have seen their fathers fall under the stroke of an avenging God. 4. We may also know from the Scripture how deep this judgment may draw in its dreadfull effects. what a judicial areast is thus served on men by which they are bound over to destruction, and their bands made strong on them, as that they can neither stirr nor move, but as malefactors shut up in jail, and under fetters; which is not more evident before the execution then this areast on their soul is by obduration before some further stroke, thus they ly neer sudden destruction and a blow that is irrecoverable who have harden'd themselves under frequent reproofs. *Prov. 26.* It is knowne what Pharaohs last rebuke was after he had rejected many, it stands upon publick record to after ages; I shall adde, is there not something of hell here? and of these everlasting fetters in some measure made visible in the earth; for where light and conviction do's resolve in rage and malice against the truth, nothing can be more like hell, or have a more neer resemblance to the devil.

10. I shall adde one instance more which may seem also strange and a marvelous piece of the providence of God, that the righteous should fall, and have one event with the wicked in a time of judgment, whilst wee see some notour for wickednes, and their horrid actings in

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opposition to the Church goe to the grave in peace, as to any remarkable stroke from the Lord upon them. I know men are ready to wonder hereat; Yea, thence an Atheist will infer things must fall out at an adventure; But O if these would bring this to the Scripture and set it fore against the same! they should there see how convincingly it is verified, and that there is nothing here which do's not clearly agree with that blessed record; for it shews. 1. That by no external providences or any thing dispensed within time, yea, by no affliction obvious to sense, the way of the Lord, and his respects to his people can be judged, even amidst the great varietie of events, which here fall out; But we are in this obliged to adore God whose judgments are incomprehensible when we see at the same time, *a just man perish in his righteousness, and a wicked man prolong his life in wickednes.* Eccl. 7. 25. 2. The Scripture gives us this return also anent such a providence, why the sword devours both, and as Saul and Jonathan fall together, that there, the Lord do's in a special way difference betwixt one and another, Josias died in peace, as was promised, *2 Kings. 22. 20.* yet he fell upon the high places of the field in the common judgment; But he was then take from the evill to come, yea, thus was delivered. even by a stroke of the hot displeasure of God on others; It is not strange that some may be hid in the grave from a further storme by the same judgment wherein the Lord is pursuing the land in which they have their abode. 3. It is clear from the Scripture how small an accession to a sinful course, may in the holy displeasure of God bring some of his people under the same stroke with his adversaries, and so farr involve them in that judgment; wee find *Pf. 1. 1.* there is a standing in the way, and joining in the counsel of the ungodly held forth as a partaking with them in their sin; and *Ezek. 9.* tells us, that not mourning for, and witnessing a dissent against the national sins of the time, puts men farr out of that blessed roll of these whom the Lord do's difference from others by a mark of his preservation. Now as to that other,

how it is the wicked prolong their days in wickedness, and may goe in some external peace to the grave, do but enquire at the Scripture, and it will shew. 1. It was no less strange to the Prophet Jeremiah Cap. 12. *Yea they prospered and took root*, did it not amaze that blessed man Ps. 73. that not only *their eyes stand out with fatness*, but they have no bands in their death. But 2. Is not the way of the Lord in this manifest, how graciously he prevents some by a sad temporal stroke, and can serve himself of a scaffold or gibbet to bring about their mercie, as he did to the thief on the cross, whilst he plagues others by a long forbearance, and his holding off such strokes, Eccl. 8. 11. the dreadfull effects whereof are held forth, because sentence is not speedily executed against wicked men; their heart is therefore set on mischief. 3. As in everie age we are called to adore the Sovereignitie of God in such a thing, he gives men also cause to observe his great judgments, some remarkable strokes on his adversaries, which they cannot pass without such a remark. *Behold a man that made not God his strength*, Ps. 52. ver. 7. But we must further wait for that full discrimination which the last sentence of the judge shall put betwixt these who fear the Lord and these who fear him not. (¶)

THE THIRD ARGUMENT.

FOR the Scriptures accomplishment is this; that which not onely the Christians experience, and observation of the Church beareth witness thereto, but is also a truth which *even to the view, and conviction of the world, may be demonstrat*, from whom it doth oft force a testimony, yea, in every age the worst of men have been forced to acknowledge, it must be a thing very evident. But the accomplishment of the Scripture can be thus witnessed, therefore; &c.

It is true these sweet, and sensible enjoyments which the Saints have of this truth, the World cannot reach;

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but it is also sure, that in every age, the works of the Lord, and some more notour convincing providences, both of judgment, and mercy do solemnly invire men, to observe the accomplishment of the word therein; yea, no time hath wanted something of a publick witnesse, from ungodly men, even greatest mockers of Religion, who under that constraining power of conscience at death, or in some day of their strait, have been forced to seal the truth by a very open confession of the righteousness of God towards them; and this is indeed the Lords blessed design in making his works sometime so conspicuous, that they may not only confirm the faith of his people, but render Atheism inexcusable, that the glory of his faithfulness, as well as of his power, and wisdom may shine forth before the sons of men. I confesse we may wonder, why the World looketh so little upon this, and how the conviction of so great a truth, which they cannot shun, doth not more presse them; but the Holy Ghost doth fully resolve this, the brutish man knoweth not, neither do fooles lay to heart, how the Scripture taketh place, that flourishing of wicked men, is but in judgment for their further ruine.

To prosecute this argument a litle, there are some special truths I would instance, wherein the faithfulness of God in fulfilling his word may be seen by the World, yea is obvious to the most ordinary observers, and though they be but a few, which I shall here touch, yet I must say, they are such concerning truths, and have so neer a reference to the foundation of our faith, that men cannot acknowledge the same, but must also confesse the Scriptures Divinity, and that there is a truth, and reality in godlines and in Christian Religion; I may truly here with some confidence challenge the greatest Atheists, yea, appeale them to their conscience, and serious thoughts, if in these following instances, (though but a little of what might be said on such a subject,) the truth & accomplishment of the Scripture be not very manifest.

FIRST. I shall first hold forth this truth that *man is surely fallen*

fallen from that excellent estate wherein once he was formed, Rom. 5. ver. 18. 19. and now is not that which he was in the beginning; a truth so clear, that we may say even without the discovery of the word might be easy for any serious on looker to discern the same, yea had not even heathens some glance at this? The evidence whereof they could not altogether shun.

It is true the cause, and original of this dreadful contagion, how sin entered into the World, how it is derived to the whole race of man, imputation, as well as infection, how that poison is carried from the fountain to the cistern, the Scripture doth only discover; but this I am sure may be obvious to all, that poor man is thus sick, and diseased, and now beareth the marks of such a fall, and ruine, as we read of in the word. I confess, it is strange that when this is so very convincing & manifest, it should not force men to some more serious enquiry, whence such a thing is, or if there can be a recovery of so sad, and desperate like case, but to clear this a little, I would offer these three things to be considered.

I. That there is some remainder of that excellent fabric, which may yet appear among its ruines, some print and appearance (though dark) of that primitive lustre and beauty, some draughts which sin hath not wholly worn out, that may clearly tell what man once was, and point out his former excellency, that he hath been another wight, of whom Absaloms character might be truly said, without all blemish from the head to the foot. For we see the deep impressions of a Deity still rooted in men, even among the most wilde, and savage which no invention can utterly raze, we see some common principles of reason that are imprinted in the most rude, and ignorant, some innate notions, and Ideas which the soul hath of good, and evil, among all, and in every place of the earth, likewise these natural truths *natural ideas* which we may see are no wayes impress on the soul from any objects of sense, but such whereto men by an unavoidable

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necessity are forced to assent, and besides, what meaneth the witness of the conscience, and authority thereof in every man, which they cannot possibly decline? O doe not these witness that from some great height poor man hath fallen.

2. Doth not the present appearance of mans nature, clearly shew he is fallen into some dreadful disease, that it is surely overspread with some horrid leprosie, and contagion, the symptomes whereof now are most discernable. O what an exorbitancy doth appear in his desires, with what contrary tydes, is he hurried? still at jar with his present lot; his reason and will, once in a sweet league, are now at warr, betwixt which he is oft rent in pieces, as one betwixt wilde horses; how is he now restless in an unreasonable pursuit, he laboureth in the fire, and for a shadow, yea, what doe these tumults, and commotions of the earth mean, men upon the smallest account sheathing their swords in others bowels, *homo homini lupus*, ruptures in families, unsatiable in revenge, and the earth so oft in an uproar as a raging sea. O doe not these too visibly witness what a dreadful disorder, and perturbation there most be within, impetuous boyling of mans lusts, so that here we may see a very manifest rupture, and breach of a building once well knitt and framed.

3. I would ask wherein mans true advantage and excellency, above others of the creatures can be seen, if not with some respect to that he once was, and that blessed restoration by grace; for his knowledge doth oft serve but to increase his sorrow, to shew the good he wanteth, and the evil he is subject to; is there any of the creatures subject to such outward misery, and pain? to so many diseases? yea as to a sensual life, may we not say the beasts have even some preference? or are these so unruly? do they so much go out of their bounds, and station? which the many lawes made for man in the world with the convincing necessity thereof can witness; we see also that fore travel is appointed to man; at how much toil he is for an outward subsistence, how he doth oft sow, and not

reap; the beasts withdraw from the yoke, these over whom he had dominion ready to assault him, how women bring forth their children in sorrow, the men are attended with fear, their life oft made bitter with care and labour, yea, as men increase in the world, their care and discontent increasing therewith, but besides all, is he not in the greatest slavery of all the creatures through the violence of his lusts? that make him pursue the baite, though he knoweth it will undoe him, while his corruption doth oft like a strong man bind him in fetters, and his flesh imperiously drag him at its heels; O may we not say, was poor man thus framed at the beginning? or raised so far above the rest of the creatures only to make him the more miserable, for truly if a vive portraiture could be drawn of sinful depraved nature, there is none so grosse but should abhor, yea be affrighted, to see that in the third person, with which alace, they so friendly comply in themselves.

SECOND. That so great a change is truly wrought upon men in conversion, as the Scripture doth promise, and hold forth, *Joh. 3. ver. 3, 6. Eph. 2. ver. 1, 5. Coloss. 3. ver. 1, 2.* wherein some thing above nature, even the marvellous power of the grace of God may be seen, is a truth I am sure, known, and undenyable to the world, yea, the greatest mockers at religion must confesse, can be no delusion, but is indeed real, and certain; upon these following grounds.

1. That the most grosse, who in their practice have been notoriously profane, in the place wherein they lived, it hath been seen, how grace hath reached them, and thus the Leopard hath been made to change his spots. and such who were accustomed to do evil have learned to doe well. O! Doe not many famous instances witness this, in every age?
2. That also men most principled in their judgement against the way of God, who were wont to deride holines as fancie, even on such, so great a change hath been wrought as hath made the world to wonder; but then they were fore-

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need to lay down their prejudice, yea to wonder at themselves, how they could stand before the truth so long, whereof they have got such an impression; sure Atheists must grant there have been as profest Atheists as themselves; who have been made eminent examples of grace.

3. That such even in the height of their wickednes (like Paul breathing out cruelty, and of late *Vergerius* while he was writing against the truth) grace hath sometimes reached them, it hath been found that of Christs greatest enemies some have thus fallen upon their high places before the power of the word; some such trophees of the gospels conquest have been conspicuous in every age; yea it is oft seen that some remarkable height in sin, hath proved an evident Crisis, and turn in mens condition either to judgment, or mercy.

4. That some of eminent adversaries of the truth have, through grace, been made eminently useful instruments in the Church, the world cannot deny; that there have not been choiser vessels of honour, more zealous for the Lord in their time then such, who were once most violent in their opposition.

5. That such whom the world did reckon most wise, and discerning, yea that did want no judgment to know the value of outward things, as well as others, grace hath reached; can the Atheists object, do any of the rulers, or Rabbies believe in Christ, or follow that way, when it is so clear that not more wise, learned, and judicious (even themselves being judges) have been in their time, then some who are most serious in the matter of Religion.

6. Hath not this change been made discernable upon the simple, the most stupid, and dull, yea, upon some such; as a natural incapacity might have obstructed the worke, if something above nature had not carried it on, which may be also manifest by some change even on their understanding, to shew that this can make the simple wise, and in the way of holines, the way faring man though fool shall not err.

7. That by a very improbable mean, the word, and that sometimes by weakest instruments, wee see this great change hath been wrought, and it is remarkable how little of the work of conversion did follow

follow the putting forth of miracles in the primitive times, but by the simplicity of the preached gospel much more, for indeed the conversion of a soul, and such a change is it selfe some way a miracle. 8. That they are not a few on whom this change hath been wrought is undeniable; and truly besides these ordinary proofs I think it is a great want there should not be some more special record by the Church, of these illustrious, and eminent instances of the grace of God, which have been in such an age, as well as remarkable instances of judgment. 9. Men must see this falleth not out at an adventure which is wrought upon one, and not an other while both are alike discerning, yea, some who seem furthest from the grace of God; very grosse, and rude, have been taken; when the more civil, and refined, and of a more promising natural disposition have been past by. O doth not this witness the grace of God, and sovereignty thereof. 10. Is not this change oft discernable upon men in a time while no advantage from without doth appear? even times of persecution and hazard, from which many have dated their first acquaintance with God; when they could expect nothing but a suffering lot, sure there must be something above nature in it. 11. It is also known how great a cloud of witnesses have sealed this truth; O! can there be such an universal enchantment, that in every age, in several yea in most remote places of the earth, hath fallen upon so many, who have witnessed the power of the Gospel; or can all these be void of understanding? What gain, or outward advantage could they designe in that which is so usually attended with outward hazard, and losse, or what credit from men, while it maketh them the very butt of the worlds hatred, and reproach? Yea, can it be thought that all these could have combined to conspire into so great a cheat? I must appeale Atheists to their serious thoughts of this matter. 12. The marvellous effect of this change, doth it not witness this is no fancy, or delusion, when men are reached with such a stroke, and by one word, as hath made the stout hearted and most

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daring to tremble, and to shew by their very countenance that there is another tribunal then mans, before which they are arraigned? Must it not be sad earnest and a marvellous power, that can make so willing a divorce betwixt men, and their idols, which were once as their right eye to them, and beat them off that ground of self-righteousnes, which they had been so long establishing to themselves, that should cause them also chose the reproach of Christ, and his crosse before any outward advantage, and abandon that society without which sometimes they could not live? Must not this speak forth something above natural reason. O! may not the world oft wonder what is become of their old friends, though I confesse this should rather put them with wonder, and astonishment, to some serious enquiry, whence so great a change can be.

(¶) It is strange the World do's not more wonder at *Conversion* which is so great a miracle, yea, may be said one of the greatest hath been in the earth, since it is no lesse marvelous, then to raise out of the grave such who are truly dead; O how convincingly demonstrative is this of the truth and reality of grace, yea even to the view of the World do's witness an irresistible efficacious power with the word, that converteth the soul, enlightens the eye, and maketh wise the simple, *Psal. 19. vers 7.* Should we not with astonishment look on a Christian if we did seriously consider what a change the grace of God makes here, from that he once was, and how great a change glory will ere long make from that he now is; I know there are many things we wonder at from our ignorance; But oh! it is mens ignorance and estrangement from this, makes it so little their wonder, for, if we be assuredly perswaded of the truth of *Conversion* which the World cannot deny, without a contradiction both to sense and reason, we have then three great truths unansweredably demonstrat. 1. That the Scripture of God is faithful and true, which holds this forth. 2, That there is a divine

divine Spirit, and a power above nature, that do's certainly accompany the same. 3. It is then clear, there are two contraire states in another World, since they are but so manifest: Now besides these evidences already mentioned, I would here offer some further upon so grave and weightie a subject, to shew how very clear and convincing the demonstration of this truth is, that the World cannot but see the very immediat power of God and something above natur in *Conversion*, if they do not shut their eyes thereat; Consider but these.

1. Is it not a strange and marvelous thing that could change one species of a creature into another, turn a wolf or tyger into a lamb, sure this would be astonishing; yet such a change is here, which makes so vast a difference betwixt one and himself, takes him off his former delights and exercises, his old friends and society, with whom he once thought the time short, yea cause the man who was a persecuter of the truth, and took pleasure therein rejoice in suffer persecution on that same account; I think the World will not debate, where so many known instances are at all times obvious. 2. Is it not marvelous which can estrange men from their worldly interests and take their heart off that which was as their right eye, and subdue under them that which once took them captive at its pleasure: O do it not shew they have got their eyes opened to see things which were formerly hid! Yea, how strange is it that these whose predominant was love to the World, and have been in their natural disposition most narrow and gripping, that they could not allow themselves the comfortable use of that they had, even these this change hath so powerfully reached to cause a willing surrender and quitting of all for Christ: I could offer known instances anent this, and these at as great and advantage then in the exercise of their judgment as ever. whom the World might see were most serious and composed therein. 3. Would you debate the efficacious power of that which should melt and dissolve the hardest stone, and may you not wonder what a power this must be, which will make men melt and dissolve in

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tears and stand trembling before the word, who through their life were knowne to be most obdured and stupide; Yea, is not this great change sometimes with such terrour and downcasting ushered in, that may convince onlookers it is a matter of greatest earnest and no counterfeit; and surely these must be reached by some power, before which there is no standing. 4. How great a thing is that which takes men unawarlike beyond their thoughts and intention, Mathew and these other disciples did not know in the morning what should befall them before night; it was indeed a happie day, when on their return they had that account to give, wee have found the Messias, and it is sure many since have been thus surpris'd, yea, in one hour have got such a sight which will never goe from their heart; they now see what report could never have made them believed, they now know what it is to be taken out of a dreadful gulf of darknes unto a marvelous light; and truly there is this usually discernable in it how some one word will force its passage and take fire within as a word beyond all others fitly spoken and fitted by divine appointment to open the heart. 5. It is a marvelous change which do's even reach young ones, and these sometimes of an age little above infancie, for it is certainly known how such whose years might shew there was no designe to cheat the world, yea, sometime in a familie where little advantage for their education hath appeared, have given evidence of this wonderfully, above themselves and their age, yea, at death have witnessed some power of the grace of God, and his Spirit on their soul, their hope and the grounds of it, with such judgment and seriousness as hath forced on bystanders this discoverie, of an immediat teaching of the Spirit, & of a mightie power of God, that can witness in these ere they can well speake or exercise reason, the power of Religion. O whence should this be! and truly for the truth thereof I could offer known instances, if it should be brought on debate, 6. What a change is it that do's also reach men in their old age, who have been long rooted and inured to the world, who have sitt many a call to their resist-

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ing the Gospel; yet is it not seen how these in their old gray hairs, have been made to weep and confess after sixtie or seventy years living under the Gospel, that then only they begun to know what it is to be Christians; I confess this is one of the rare trophies of the grace of God, yet no age wants some such instances to prove, how far grace can prevail over nature, custome, education and all these disadvantages which use to follow the time of old age. 7. What a strange power is it which hath been so evidently witnessed on some horridly flagitious, who have outrun others in all manner of wickednes; yea, even then whilst justice was crying for punishment to cutt them off, grace hath stept in to save, and reached them at a scaffold or gibbet; it is sure the world cannot question this truth, and O should it not be convincing to see two brought to a publick death for some grosse crime who have the same hazard before them, them, the same means made use of for their conviction, yet the one melting in contrition, the other most obdured; you cannot say that this is from a different nature and constitution, since sometimes these of a more promising nature and better disposition have been seen further off, then such of whom least was expected. 8. Is it not a strange change which, even on these where no ordinary means could be subservient, can be witnessed, where no company, no example, no usual way for instruction can be alleadged, so that it may be seen, they have been truly taught of the Lord, that there is such a thing as his immediat teaching; that in a verie extraordinary way by means most improbable he can convoy himself in to the soul, in a word, this can be no result of ones natural complexion, for then it would appear in, and accompany their younger years in some measure, and grow up with them; this change also in these of most different natures, most unlike and cross to others humour and disposition is made discernable; yea, must it not be something above moral swasion, or any perswasives of humane eloquence? since here the foolishness of preaching is found more effectual, then any such way; yea, it is seen
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how the most sublime and polish'd strains of oratorie, and greatest gifts have oft come short of that success, which hath followed more improbable means; I shall adde, O is not this something above nature which makes men partake of the divine nature, and do's so visibly impress the image of God on them.

I shall shut this up with three remarkable instances of the power and efficacy of grace in *Conversion*, of which in every age there may be a large record. First that excellent man *Junius*, whose life we have in some measure set down by himself, with many notable remark's of providences, and therein shews the Lords ingadging him at first, how being very loose, and carried away with evil company, yea tempted to Atheism, he was one day moved to goe and read the Scripture; and at the first opening, trysted with that of the first of Iohn; which whilst he read as he says did suddenly astonish him; and leave a marvellous conviction on his soul, of the divinity of the subject, the Majesty and Authority of the writting; that all day he knew not where, and what he was; but thus turns himself with these words to the Lord, Thou wast mindefull of me; O my God, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies; Yea, giv's this accompt that he then had a sight of the Scripture, which made him see it did exceed all humane eloquence, and this was followed with such power that his body trembled, and his minde became astonished, with such a surprising and marvellous light; and from that day begun to be serious in the way of the Lord.

A second instance I shall offer is, the remarkable *Conversion* of worthie Master *Bolton*, a choise Minister in the Church of England, in whose life this is recorded, that being eminentlie prophane, a horrid swearer, and much accustomed to mock at holiness, and these who most shined therein, and particularly that excellent Man of God Mr. *Perkins*, then Preacher in *Cambridge*, whom he much undervalued for his plainness in preaching the truths of God, yea was near the length of Poperie; but on the

Lords gracious appearance to him, was put to have other thoughts, with a very remarkable change upon him, though with that terrour, that as he said himself, the Lord seemed to run upon him, like a giant, throwing him to the ground, and with such a terrifying discovery of sin, caused him roar in anguish, and oft rise in the night on that accompt, which continued for diverse moneths; Yea these assaults in the pangs of the new birth were such, that it might have been said, *Vt nec color. nec sensus, nec sanguis superesset*; but at last a blessed sun-shine brak up, and shining light. Now besids these two great men, I think it not unsutable, since it is to commend the grace of God, and witnes the reality thereof. who of all kinde of sinners, as well as of all kindreds and nations, hath brought some to glory, that I sett down one very strange instance in this countrey, of a poor ~~man~~ who not many years ago was put to death in the town of Air, for that horrid wickednes, he had been a most stupid, & brutish person, such an one who looked to all who knew him, as if he had been above the reach of ordinary means; but in the prison, the Lord did marvellously witnes the power of his grace, and in such a measure discovered to him his sinfulness, that after much serious exercise upon his soul, and sore wrestling, a most kindly work of repentance did appear, with great assurance, so that when he came to the stake, he could not cease from crying out to the people, under the fence of pardon, and that comforting sunshine of the presence of God; *O he is a great forgiver, he is a great forgiver*; and had therewith these words; now hath perfect love cast out all fear, I know God hath nothing to lay against me, for Jesus Christ hath payed all, and these are free whom the son makes free, thus in a transport of wonder and joy, did he die; the marvellous grace of God raising him then above other men, who not long before, seemed in some respect, below a beast. (¶)

THIRD. That communion, and fellowship with God, whereto the Saints are in this life admitted, and brought near

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near to him in the spirit, *is a most real thing*, and no delusion, is a truth which may be very convincingly demonstrated, even to the view of the world, and to such who are but onlookers on the same. 1 *Joh. 1. v. 3. Phil. 3. ver. 20.* I know this is a truth that must be spiritually discerned, and therefore the world can not know it or reach that unspeakable joy, and delight which is found by the Saints in that sweet path; yet must say there are somethings, and some such convincing evidences, as may witness to men, and rationally demonstrat the same; the conviction whereof they cannot possibly shun, if they but come near, and in their serious thoughts consider.

1. How great, and excellent a company doe bear this testimony, even as many as in every time did ever serve God in the Spirit; is not this transmitted by the fathers to the children as their experience? And as certainly tried by succeeding ages, a truth which is not once, or twice proved in the Christians life, for the proofs thereof are innumerable, and past reckoning, which they have had, yea amongst all the Saints since the dayes of Abel, to this present time, there was never one contradictory witness could be produced.

2. Are not these who do thus testify, what they have oft found in secret retirements to God, such whose testimony in any other matter, the worst of men could not refuse or deny to be famous, I am sure the World is convinced. that the followers of Christ dare not, yea, use not deal falsely in other things with these they have to do with, how ever their malice carry them to reproach them, yea, that they are more to be credited then such, who make a scorn of Religion.

3. Have they not had as great interest, and share of the World as others, and been of as discerning spirits to know the true value of things, who from their experience doe not only declare, there is an undoubted reality in converse with God, but that the joy and delight herein which they have found, is above all the pleasures of the flesh. O! what must that be which could make such who wanted no out-

ward allurements, who had not lost their taste, and were flesh and blood as well as others to turn their back on all for Christ, and by their walk testify they have found some more satisfying enjoyment in fellowship with God?

4. Must not this be very obvious, and convincing that when men once become serious in the way of God they have got some new acquaintance, that sure there is another world, and some other society then that of men with which they have intercour; Whence are these frequent retirements, from which they have been seen so oft to come forth with greatest satisfaction, and with some remarkable change in their case, doth it not thus appear *They are not alone, when they are alone*, yea, in such a solitude must find something very desirable?

5. Is not this also testified in times, when men could not well dissemble, or be suspected of deceit, in times of great outward affliction, when the World also hath been most tempting, with its offers, yea, at death when they are stepping over that threshold; a time, wherein the words of dying men are of greatest weight, and credit, the spirits of such being then more unbyassed, and free of these ordinary temptations wherewith others are swayed. How oft have they at such times declared that surely God is familiar with men, which they have found, and though they were going to change their place, yet were not to change their company.

6. Can that be a delusion which is so sensible in the present time, whereof the Saints are not more sure that they live then they are sure of this truth, what near approaches and refreshing views they have got, while God hath come near to their soul, what a discernable elevation of their spirits doth go along with this? yea, on the other hand, as the withdrawing hereof is very sensible to themselves, is there not something of this even obvious to bystanders, how great a change, and difference this will make in their case, from other times, which they cannot get hid.

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countenance, and outward carriage of Christians, what a lustre, & resemblance of Heaven, a holy stayednes, and composure of spirit, when they have been brought neer God, in secret converse with him, & taken up to the mountain; in a word, doth not the walk of a serious mortified Christian convincingly witness this, yea, cannot but be some way astonishing to the World, what should make them look so well, and with such satisfaction, when no visible cause for it, when shut up in prison from converse with friends, and acquaintance? Sure men will not think a rational spirit so demented to quite their former pleasures, and chuse the crosse that they may only deceive the World, with a counterfeited joy and satisfaction, if they did not really find the same; and while it is too too evident, what a dreadful society and commerce many have with the Devil, should any question, or debate, whether the Saints have truly communion and fellowship with God the Father of Spirits, whom they serve, and worship.

FOURTH. *That the righteous is more excellent then his neighbour, Prov. 12: ver. 26.* And hath an other spirit which is greater, and more choice, then that which is in the World, is a truth which, I am sure, men not withstanding all their prejudice must needs confesse, and that therein the Scripture is truly verified, when such clear and convincing evidences, doe stare them in the face, I confesse the Saints are much under a dark cloud here, through the prevalency of corruption, yea, are oft accounted as the filth of the world, but when grace in any greater measure, and its vigorous exercise doth shew it selfe, then there appeareth so much as will darken all the grandour of this earth, and force men to see an excellency upon the saints, beyond any others, they cannot altogether shun such a conviction. First, what an evident difference is betwixt their way, who walk with God, and that of the most polished moralist, something is in the one which doth witness a more excellent spirit, a higher elevation, a sweet harmony, and equability in their way, that they

move in some higher sphere, act from other principles, with a respect to some greater interest then any thing here, have more of a large heart to serve their generation, then these whose self-interest is seen to be the first, and last in all their motions.

2. May it not also appear to onlookers that tender serious Christians who live neer God, do truly witnesse their resemblance, and likenesse to him to whom they move, as to their great, and last end; yea, do evidence a more true excellency of spirit, what a sweet calm, and serenity they have within, while going through things that are most crosse, and vexing; with what discernable quietnes these can look upon most affrighting revolutions in the world, as such, whose treasure and great interest is beyond hazard, though the earth were all turned to ashes.

3. Is there not so much in the way and carriage of the saints, yea, such a majesty, and authority, that attendeth holines, as doth force respect, and fear, even from these who most hate them, yea and doth force men to justify such in their conscience; whom they openly reproach, and and persecut; whence it is that a serious tender Christian, is oft a scar-crow, and terrour to the prophane, when there is no outward cause for it, but that they are struck with the conviction of a more excellent spirit in these, carrying such a resemblance to the image of God as forceth fear, and subjection from that spirit which is in the world.

4. Doth not a Christian, and holy walk cause men shine, as a light in the midst of a crooked & perverse generation, yea darken all their neighbours; and in the darkest night is it not seen how grace shineth with the greatest lustre, what a sweet, and odoriferous sent, doth this send through the countrey where they live, that may shew to all how great a difference there is betwixt such, and these who are wallowing in this puddle of the earth.

5. Is it not obvious what a lustre and beauty, yea, something more becoming our immortal soul that is in the self-denial of Christians, their bearing injuries, forgiving such as injure them, without reviling, then in that proud vindictive

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6. It may be also evident to the world, what an other spirit is in these, who do not bow with the speate of every time, nor yeeld to men because of their outward power, then in that spirit which is in the world, that while the one doth presse men to save themselves on any terms, the other doth cause the Christian take up his crosse, yea lay down his life, to save his conscience; and whence is that patience, and resolution by which the godly in times of suffering have overcome their persecutors, their bold avowing of the truth before men, when hazards are most obvious, & that advantage wherewith they appear above others in such a time. O! doth it not clearly witnes, they are of an other mettall, who doe thus abide the fire, yeabecome more bright by that wherewith others are consumed?

I would add that which the world cannot deny, how this spirit, which is in the Saints, hath prevailed over the greatest entisements of carnal gain, and pleasure, which to many may seem a wonder, as the Popish party did once say of Luther, *Bestia hæc non curat aurum*, that which they did speak in contempt, that it did prove him a beast, did in effect shew him therein, to be something above men; for that is a thing before which the spirit of the world could never stand.

FIFTH. That the promised encouragements which is held forth to the People of God under trouble and suffering for his name is a truth, and the Scripture herein verified, I am sure not onely Christian experience, can witnes, but may even to the observat[i]on of others, be demonstrat from very convincing grounds, that it is no fancy or delusion, Ps. 9. ver. 9. *Is. 51. ver. 12.*

1. The very countenance and outward appearance of the godly. in a suffering time, doth oft declare the peace, and tranquillity of their soul, so as surely they must have joy, and satisfaction from whence the world doth not

know, and have some other correspondence, then with things visible, for it may be oft said. as of Daniel, and his fellows that under greatest pressures, and a very mean condition, they look as well, yea, with as much chearfulness as these who live on the Kings allowance.

2. It can be no counterfeite, which should thus reconcile the christian with a suffering lot, for it is known how very searching affliction and trouble proveth, which oft doth broach the vessel, and bring forth what hath formerly most closely lurked: And O! Doth not that holy confidence, and freedome which the Saints have evidenced in confessing the truth, before the princes of this world and their most cruel adversaries, yea, that chearfulness which in most extream pieces of suffering they oft doe witness, even when they are resisting to the blood, doth not this speak forth something beyond the gallantry of a natural spirit, that far exceedeth the ordinary way of men, and is a thing the world cannot but wonder, and whither they will, or not see Gods very immediat help, and hand in the same, according to his word?

3. Is it not seen how the chearful way of the Godly under suffering, while there is no outward ground for the same doth not only astonish, but is an exceeding torment to adversaries? when they are forced to see, how all their endeavours (when their wrath and malice hath been to the outmost put forth) have yet been in vain, either to turn them aside, or to ruine their encouragement, but that the most sharp sufferings of Godly, doe still give them the forest dash, help to strengthen others, justify Gods way, and that tender respect he hath to his suffering people, even before all onlookers.

4. Is it not also manifest, that such whose natural disposition was known to be very fainting and timorous, yet when called to suffer for the truth have without the least appearance of discouragement, showed an invincible resolution, and not only their own feares, but the expectation of others hath a marvellous disappointment. O is there not there a visible fulfilling of the Scripture, that

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shaking reeds should be made to stand, where strongest cedars have bowed, yea, some of very mean, and ordinary parts have been so discernably raised above themselves, as they were made to confound the wise, and learned.

5. Must it not be confessed that the zeal and resolution of the saints did never more appear then in times of greatest opposition? that at no time they have looked more like Christians with more advantage, and with some peculiar beauty, and lustre of the grace of God, then under suffering, a thing which as it eminently doth commend the gospel, hath also so far convinced their enemies, as in some measure it hath blunted their edge, and taken off their prejudice against the way of God, and followers thereof.

6. I may appeal the greatest Atheists to their conscience, if any moral arguments (what ever influence they may have upon mens patient enduring) could ever produce such effects as rejoycing in tribulation the choosling affliction before sin, & all its pleasures, to triumph over persecutors, & to go with such a calme, and chearfulness to a scaffold, to sing amidst a dark prison, yea, and to abound, and have all things under greatest want? O! whence is this? sure something above nature must be here. that is stronger then moral reasons, by which the Saints have thus overcome the world, yea, is it not obvious to all who look on, how great a difference there is betwixt the pretended resolution of a natural spirit in death & suffering, and that joy, and confidence of a Christian, which hath then shewed in the composure and tranquillity of their soul within? The one being but a dark shadow, and the other drawn to the life.

SIXTH. That there is a conscience within men, whose power both as a judge, and witnes doth answer that clear discovery, the Scripture giveth thereof, Rom. 2: ver. 9. Is a thing obvious even to the world which they must needs confesse both from its visible effect on others, and the

working thereof within themselves; that herein the Word is verified these things make it clear, and undeniable.

1. That sure there is something within which thus maketh men affrayed to be alone with themselves, yea, will cause them go abroad, and frame diversions to be out of its noise, must it not be sad earnest, which hath so dreadful a sound in their ear, doth haunt the wicked man whither he will, or not? wherewith he would gladly be at peace, but amidst his greatest mirth, and prosperity, this doth mingle his wine with gall, and wormwood.

2. Is it not also sure that men have oft an accuser within their breast, while they seem to brave it out before others, whose judgment, and sentence they can by no means decline, but after the committing of sin, yea, on the back of their sinful pleasures doth follow the same with a bitter sting, and ring this dreadful knell in their ear, that in the end their way will be bitterness. O! is not this an accusing conscience, which doth begin the torment of some before the time?

3. What is it that should make mens guilt so legible oft in their countenance, even when they studie most to conceal it, and thus cause them give their tongue the lye, yea, bewray to bystanders whither they will or not, some secret trouble, and sore they have within, doth it not clearly shew the power of the conscience, which hath such authority on men, that without violence, or constraint from others, doth even force them to confesse the truth, and supply the room of witnesses?

4. Whence is it some are so much disquieted for secret sins, which the eyes of others could not reach, yea that some grosse sins, even the most profligate amongst men have an horror at them without respect to outward hazard, doth it not shew the power of a natural conscience, that holdeth forth a greater party then the world with which they have to do, to whom all things are manifest, and some greater witness then that of man?

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could not reach, and in the midst of all probable advantages have yet often most affrighting thoughts, much terrour, and disquieting reflexions? must it not be from within which doth cause them fear, an other power then that of the world, and a judgment greater then that of man?

6. What must it be which doth force men to justify God when his hand doth pursue them, and maketh them so easily find out sin in a time of their strait, why is the sense of guilt, so very affrighting at death, is it not the conscience which doth preface a future judgment, and extend its power to matters of an everlasting concernment, and duration?

7. What should make men tremble at the word and so much hate a searching ministry, is it not because the light doth torment them, though the word doth particularly name none, but that there is something within, which maketh application of the truth, and doth plainly say, thou art the man?

8. How doe the worst of men oft justify these in secret, whom they openly have condemned, that while they are even persecuting the saints for truth and holines, yet, for these they give them, and their way a favorable testimony, over the belly of all their prejudices, yea what is it that doth cause a secret fear, and awful regard, of such whom they hate, doth it not shew something within, whose judgment they are not able to resist?

9. I must further ask whence is that horreur, and these dreadful cries, and groans which wicked men oft have in their sickness, even such who were wont to sport at sin, with a daring countenance; can the world get this past without some remark, how intollerable a thing an evil conscience is, when once let loose, when in all ages such terrifying examples of this kinde have been set up for all that past by to look on, such as Spira, Latomus, Olivarius, &c. and truly, I think it is a great want there should not be a more particular record of such, which would give Atheisme so great a dash, yea, force men to confesse the truth of a Deity, and of the written word.

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(9) This is a great truth, & a great demonstration of God (O blessed for ever) his being, and of the truth of his word, that there is a *Conscience*, so strange a power, which every man hath within him and over him, that forceth the soul to a reflection on its self even when it trembles at that sight, and with an awful sound tells the Atheist there is a God, when he seems to have no fear or conviction thereof; this is that great tormenter and troubler of the World, from which there is no retreat, though one should flee to the uttermost parts of the earth, who keeps a high court of justice under the authority of the great Judge, and there without respect of persons do's summon great and small, do's arrest, bring in witness, sentences, yea, in some measure, puts that in execution, and can make hell begin there, by an unexpressible anguish and horror: It is strange that such a thing when it is so undeniable, do's not stare the World in the face with more amazement, but I shall further offer some few evidences of the truth besides these already mentioned.

1. Could there be such a power in man to difference betwixt that good and evil which is within him, if there were not also some higher power above him, who hath thus form'd him, with such principles? Yea, could there be a judging and witnessing within a man, if there were not a law and rule over him: for it is sure the conscience in all its actings hath respect to a higher judgment and to a law, which even natures light, though very dim, holds forth, but is express and clear in the Scripture which is that great rule of the conscience. 2. Is it not very strange to see such a power within a man, and yet against him, that the grossest Atheist is an enemy to it, yet cannot be without it, or get it shaken off, and whilst it is known how strong a byass, and inclination these have to evil, more then good, they are yet forced to justify the one more then the other, the drunkard cannot drown this conviction, nor the worldling burie it in the earth, where his treasure lies. 3. Though men may come some length to divert the conscience and silence it, that it cannot ex-

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erce its function, without some special divine excitation, yet is it not manifest how then when once it is awaked, there is no possible withstanding, then the stout hearted cannot keep his ground to debate with it; yea, when they run it follows with as swift a pace, no skill, no arguments can defend from its force, no violence against such a power, but whilst in the convoy of sin. they overreach the witness of men, so this is continually at hand to tell them, that he who is greater then the conscience, do's regard. 4. Can any thing be more real & certain, then these effects of the conscience, I mean that trouble and fear men have in sinning, and that peace and satisfaction that attends well doing? Do you know such a place of the earth whither this power hath not some place to overaw men, even without any visible aw or hazard; and can all mankind, through the whole World, in all ages be in so strange a delusion, if there were no real ground for it. 5. How convincingly do's this witness there is a conscience, and the reality of it, that men are at so much work to bribe it, to frame diversions thereto, yea, to finde out false grounds of peace, and some such gloss and commentary, as may reconcile the rule with their grossest actings and exorbitancies; and why is this, but that in outdaring it, they finde it stronger then they, and therefore must counterwork, by darkening that great light and finde out some shew of reason to silence conscience, and promise peace to themselves, though they walk in the wickednes of their heart. 6. Do not these strange extremes, which oft are obvious in mens condition, witness the reality of this power? O what a marvelous thing to see one stupide this day, and desperat the next, the conscience breaking up, at that rate, that to be rid thereof and its torment, the poor man would seek a shelter in the grave; yea, is it not usual to see some wear out their time as beasts, yet at dying seased with an inexpressible horror of God? is not this something wakened, which was formerly asleep? 7. Do not men see such desperat acts of wickednes in the World, such furious running

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over warnings and convictions, that may even convincingly shew some pursute of the conscience. and that horrid way they take to be rid of it by revenge, to give it a further wound and silence its noyse, by some violent deep stroke.

8. Are not these sudden unlooked for outbreakings of the conscience most remarkable; how it takes some unawares, and grows upon them the more they strive with it; it is known also, what reflections men usually have on themselves and their actions, in some present exigent and hazard; yea. how they are thus affrighted, or in some measure quiet, as they are put to condemne or acquite themselves on that score: Now is not this a convincing witness of the force of a natural conscience, and likewise that usual recourse which the grossest of men will in such an extremity have to God by prayer, do's both declare this; and that impression they have upon them of a Deity. 9. How marvellous a confidence and support do's the conscience afford where it is a friend, under the greatest misery and trouble from without, for thus a mans spirit can sustain its infirmities, but O when it is an adversary nothing, nothing so unsupportable, it will torment and tear one within when there is none without dare provok him; yea, cause the oppressour tremble, whilst it upholds the oppressed with confidence, it makes the one eat his bread with joy; when it imbitters the pleasant morsels of others. (¶)

SEVENTH That there is a reward for the righteous and unquestionable gain in Godlines, is a piece of the Scripture not onely well known, and witnessed to the observing Christian in his experience, but is also held forth in every age, as in great letters to the view of the world Ps. 58: ver. 11. Ps. 97: ver. 11. Is. 3: ver. 10. It is true that the Christians lot is oft followed with much trouble, and sometimes with loss of his life, which may seem to have a very dismal aspect: for that great goodnes which the man who feareth God hath ensured to him: is much laid up in another world; but it is also sure that there are such notour conyincing proofes of this truth held forth even to the ob-

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servation of men, by which the Lord hath in every age confirmed the same, that I am sure the greatest Atheist cannot answer even these.

1. That this is the very dictate of a natural conscience not onely that God is, but that he is a rewarder of such as serve him, yea, none amongst men are so grosse, or brutish who are not in some measure principled to difference betwixt good, and evil, with some fear of a punishment to the one, and some hope of recompence to the other, and are also forced to notice some more signal and convincing examples, which have been of that kinde in their time.

2. Must we not say, yea, doth not the World see, in every age, that history of Joseph in some part acted over again? Sure there have not been wanting many such remarkable instances, wherein it might be easy to trace an upright and straight walk through a very maze and labyrinth of changes, and to show how that hath been their condition, and at last integrity hath brought them to land in a comfortable harbour, yea how often they have had a marvellous, unlooked for outgate, contrary to all humane appearance, this indeed is no romance, but a most true history which through all times, and many examples, might be written of the Word and providence, which should surpass the richest fancy that any fiction, or romance did ever contain.

3. Must it not be convincing, even to the worst of men, what a visible blessing doth oft follow the mean lot of some of the Saints, which can make their little reach far, and cause them abound more in their poverty then others amidst their abundance, which I think the world cannot shun to observe and gather that there is, sure, something else then mens own care, which doth their busines; and how that ordinary proverb falleth not to the ground, that it is better to be happy then wise, when they see a secret judgment blow upon some mens estate that no meanes can prevent, and a secret blessing which maketh things prosper, and take

take effect, accompany the Christians little, so as it may be easy for such who looke abroad to see where real contentment with chearfulness, & giving of thanks, useth to dwel.

4. May not the world see there is a feast in a good conscience how little soever they partake of the World, that well doing, and the practise of godliness hath some present reward in its hand; whereas so remarkable a difference may be discerned betwixt the countenance, and carriage of such, and of them who trust in falsehood, that surely in a time of strait, these have an other kinde of security, and confidence, when greatest natural spirits fail, yea, that these alone, can enjoy themselves, have most calm and composed spirits, amidst the several changes of their life, that according to outward things, their peace doth not ebb, nor flow, but they are at a seen advantage above others in the day when men are sore outwitted with their straites, so as it will be most easy then to see the good and advantage of religion, when the vanity of other advantages. is most discernable.

5. Is it not also seen that true honour doth truely wait on humility, and followeth such, but it fleeth from them who doe most pursue it, yea, that faithfulness and an upright walk will gain credit even amongst her enemies, and respect before the World.

6. That these who are faithful in their life, and diligent improvers of a small talent, have usually more added with some discernable growth following the same, and as the drying up of the parts of some, as a judgment on unfaithfulness, is oft obvious, so also such a blessing upon serious diligence, as hath made the last first, and even outrun such who were once before them; yea, it is truely seen how grace helpeth mens gifts, doth raise, and sublimat their spirits, above that which once they were.

7. Doth not the Lord put some visible difference oft, betwixt the righteous, and the wicked in a time of common calamity? that a strange outgate with the concurrence of very marvellous providences, doth sometime tryst such
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8. What truth, at the conscience choice, and able, yea, made not re tage where will confess men, to th

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even to the conviction of onlookers which may tell the World, such have had an invisable hedge of preservation about them, and have been under some better care, then their own.

8. What a clear witness doe ungodly men oft bear to this truth, at their death, or at some other strait, so that their conscience hath forced them to justify the godly mens choice, and to say that the lot of such is onely most desirable, yea, with much bitterness to lament their folly that made not religion more their business, the good and advantage whereof is now no matter of debate; sure the World will confesse how oft the confession; and testimony of such men, to this truth, hath reached their ear.

9. I shall but adde, that which is so very manifest, how faithfulness, and integrity doth transmit mens name with more honour. yea maketh it have a sweeter savour in ther, generations, then either riches, or outward preferment; yea, that there is a great difference betwixt the memorial of the righteous; and the wicked even to the conviction of the world.

EIGHT. That verily there is a God who judgeth in the earth, Ps. 58: ver. 11. who doth render unto men vengeance, and doth pursue the transgressor because of sin, is a truth which the world hath in every age by many convincing instances held forth to them, where they may see the Scripture clearly verified.

I have a litle touched this in the second Argument how the accomplishing of Scripture threatnings is witnessed to the observation of the Church, and to these who are wise to discern the times wherein they live; I shall here point at this truth, as it is in the providence of God, written in such great letters, as are obvious to the view of the World, so as most common onlookers cannot passe this without a remark; it is true much may be laid over to that great general assize of the last judgment, that day of retribution; yea, sometimes we see the most wicked and vile, go in peace to the grave; the sovereignty of God

doth also appear very obſervably, in the different meafure, and kind of puniſhment; and it is too evident how prone men are to look more to the intereſt that ſecond cauſes have in ſuch a thing, then to a divine hand; but this is alſo ſure that the Lord is known on the earth, by the judgment which he executeth, and in every age doth ſet up ſuch convincing examples before men, that the greateſt atheiſt may ſee, yea, oſt their conſcience muſt break the jayle, reſtrain it as they will, and force this acknowledgement, that ſuch judgements can be no casual thing; while ſomething of a power higher then man, and a clear verifying of the word is ſo diſcernable therein.

Now to demonſtrat this truth I would offer ſomethings which may ſhew how very near this cometh to the obſervation of men, ſo as none can be a ſtranger thereto, or want conviction of this piece of the truth of God, except they willingly ſhut their eyes, while it is clear.

1. That the very Heathens who never knew the Scripture, nor a written Law, have yet ſo much of a natural conſcience that not only they can put ſome difference between vertue, and vice, but even in ſome meafure can diſcern Gods putting ſome difference betwixt the ſame; how flagitious crimes uſe to be puniſhed by a divine hand; we may ſay, time could never yet wear out the obſervation of this truth, through the World, and though many things may be received, and credited, which not having a ſure ground do quickly evaniſh, it being truths priviledge ſtill to out live falſhood, yet, it is ſure, how in the darkeſt parts of the earth, this hath been ſtill noticed with a remark, and tranſmitted from one age to another, yea the records of the nations even by heathen writers ſhew what remarkable puniſhment hath followed cruel oppreſſion, Covenant breaking, and ſuch other groſſe ſins againſt the ſecond table; yea, how theſe have been the uſual forerunners of great ſtrokes on Kingdomes and families.

2. Doth not the World ſee, that in theſe remarkable judgments which have come on a nation, and People, there is ſomething higher then instruments, or ſecond cauſes, which

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which may be very evident in bringing the same about: so that all who goe by must confesse, such is no casual tryft, nor doth arise out of the dust, but that surely a divine hand is there; and truly though some desolating strokes, are very terrible in themselves, and blood, and ruines should be no matter of pleasure, yet, whereas, thereby that stately sound is heard, even his voice who maketh the earth to tremble, and God is made known to the sons of men; we should not only with fear, but even some holy congratulation consider his work; now to clear what a convincing witness these are to this truth, I shall point at some very obvious remarks, which I am sure the World cannot contradict of the Lords own immediat hand in such judgments.

1. That strange concurrence and tryft of providence which useth to appear when God is against a People, how all things will then conspire, as a fatal conjunction to work their woe, and ruine, that men may see, surely this is from the Lord, who is wonderful in counsel, & from a hand against which there is no striving. 2. How such remarkable strokes are seen to tryft with some great, and remarkable height of sin in such a nation, and People, so that it is easy then for all onlookers to confess the righteousness of God therein. 3. When judgment is coming on a land it may appear how instruments are raised, and in a more then ordinary way acted with all advantages for such a piece of service. 4. There is a visible blasting then both of counsel, and strength, and these meanes which otherways looked most probable; how remarkably such are confounded even in the use of their ordinary abilities, their heart and usual courage taken from them while the Lord is on a work of judgment. 5. That astonishing successe which is usually seen to follow these whom the Lord sendeth forth to execut his judgment, how then they move swiftly, and with vigour, they doe not stumble, or wearie, it is neither rivers, nor walled cities can stand in their way; mountaines are made vallies to shew it is the Lord whose hand in that day is strong upon them, to strengthen their joins, and make the sword, and axe sharp for his

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service. 6. Amidst these various strokes which come on a land, can men passe that of the *Pestilence* without some special note, where Gods immediat hand, something supernatural above ordinary or natural causes may be clearly seen, both in its strange progresse in spreading, which like a lightning doth oft go through cities and countreys in a smal time; do not these tell aloud to the World that they come not unsent, and without some special commission; and that there is no striving against them, nor are ordinary meanes effectual in some such extraordinary plagues until he who brought it on, do also by his own hand take it off.

3. It is very obvious even to the world that clear resemblance which is oft betwixt sin, and the stroke, how holy justice doth keep a proportion, and doth shape out the judgment so exactly both measure, and kind, that it may be easy to see the stroke pointing, as with an hand, to the cause by its discernable likenes, and both at the righteous judgment of God which thus measured out to men, as they have dealt with others: We see how the Lord trusted Agag, and Adonibezek, how Sodoms burning lust was punished with fire from Heaven, yea what even David had measured out for his murther, and adultery; the sword shall not depart from his house, and for the other his wives by his own ion abused, and truely every ages observation can witness this truth from many convincing examples, that there is a God who judgeth in the earth, it being oft seen if men would seriously observe. 1. How an universal overspreading of sin in a land, hath usually some national, and universal stroke following. 2. That blood waiteth on bloody men, and suffereth them not oft to live out half their dayes; one oppressour punished by another, the unmercifull man payed home in his own coyn, by such as shall shew as little mercy to him, or his. 3. How the proud, and insolent who do most hunt after outward glory, are usually trysted with some humbling abasing stroke, he powreth contempt on Princes, and such who will not honour God shall not brook that honour they seek from men. 4. That such who have been most given up to uncleannes

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are oft seen not to encrease as to their posterity, but their issue observeably made to faile, yea, by a divine hand rooted out, sure many such signal examples might be instanced. 5. How such who have choosed sin to shun trouble, and suffering, have in their sinful way got as large a measure thereof, as that man who in *Q. Maryes* time said, he could not burn for the truth, and therefore forsook it, by an unseen hand had both himsele, and his house in one night burnt. 6. That the treacherous, and deceitful men are thus dealt with by others, yea, children who have been unduetiful to their parents, have from theirs met with the same recompence. 7. That whilest men to make a purchase have even denyed themselves the necessary use of outward things, are oft seen to leave their estate to such, who do quickly wast and scatter the same, and thus the sinful parsimony of parents punished with the prodigality of such who succeed them. 8. That the frequent use of some dreadful imprecations is oft punished by the Lord with a sutable stroke to the conviction both of themselves, and on-lookers. 9. How such as have joyned together, and united themselves against the truth have been visibly broken as to their own privat interest, and truely we must say there is oft such a tryst of very convincing circumstances, in some acts of the judgment of God, with such a resemblance to the sin, yea, judgment sometime pursuing men in the very place, where the sin hath been acted that it may be easy for all who go by to say, there is indeed a God who judgeth in the earth.

4. Doth it not appear, how very convincing and obvious this truth is even to the World, from these ordinary remarks, and proverbial sayings which we find in all ages, and in every part of the earth, even the most rude, and ignorant have had, of the judgment of God; for truely what else are these but an expresse witness, how universally this truth is known, and received by men, how much the World is convinced thereof, through a long tract of observation from the fathers to the children, yea, thence they have had a divinity of their own, drawn out thereof;

how such sins do not use to passe without some notour punishment. Now I would but name some few of these remarks, that have been most usual in all times. 1. How some families have not thriven, but a secret judgment hath been discernable thereon since they had hand in some grosse acts of wickednesse, such as blooshed, their former prosperity from such a day visibly declining. 2. How that an evil purchase useth not to be of long continuance, but their estate oft in a very strange, and unsensible way made to evanish, which their children though frugal can by no meanes keep up, and the cause hereof, men doe easily point at; it was purchased by fraud transmitted with a curse cleaving thereto, and so there was no warding of the judgment of God. 3. Such who doe not much consider Gods controversy, yet are oft forced to remark that since some have medled, or matched with such an house, they have sadly smarted thereby, something of a curse even following the race, and posterity of some. 4. How sacrilegious meddling with that which hath been for a pious, and publick use hath caused a visible wast and consumption in their own estate. 5. That mens asking counsel from the Devil, and turning to that airth for their help, doth usually resolve in a sad, and tragick close. and truly this, many in the shutting up of their life have been forced to confesse. 6. That falshood doth not use to keep its feet, nor a wicked way long prosper, what ever it seem to the first view, yea, I may adde as one of the Worlds remarks which they cannot well shun, that which seemeth was an ordinary saying in the time of Ester, that it is not safe troubling the Church, or for men to state themselves in opposition to that party, and I dare not question, but this shall be yet as convincing, and obvious to the World as it hath been in any former ages.

5. Is not the appearance of a divine hand oft very obvious to the World in the discovery of sin, and bringing to light some grosse acts of wickednes, even in extraordinary way, while it is seen. 1. By what strange unexpected meanes, these have been brought forth, such an astonishing tryft, and

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and concurrence of things therein as hath forced not only onlookers, to some special remark, but hath even struck the guilty party through the heart with wonder, and conviction of the same. 2. How the hand of Justice pursuing men for some notour, and known crime, doth oft bring to light some that have been most secret, which they thought the World could never reach, yea, it may be frequently seen while men have been in one sin found out, it hath also brought forth the discovery of some other, and forced them to confesse, that it was a righteous judgment pursuing them for the same. It is a thing also known, yea, by many undeniable instances witnessed, that marvellous discovery of concealed murther, by the bleeding of the body upon the touch of the murtherer. I confesse it should be hard to asser the lawful, and warrantable practice of such an appeal to so extraordinary, and stupendious a sign from the Lord, where Scripture goeth not clearly before us, but on the other hand, such a thing so surely tryed for such an end, and in the case where all ordinary meanes of discovery have been wanting, I think calleth us to a serious remark thereof, while it so visibly seemeth to witness his hand, who doth make inquisition for blood.

6. Is not the dreadful consternation, these tormenting feares which men after some grosse acts of wickednesse do bewray, a very obvious witness to this truth, that there is a God who judgeth on the earth, in whose hands it is a terrible thing to fall; and sheweth how great a punishment wickednes is to its self, truely if Atheists turn not brutish, and stupid, they must notice this, and confesse a thing which doth so oft reach their eares, what have been the horrid cryes of many dying men who have most sported with sin in their life; that may tell bystanders there is a judge who can stretch forth his hand on the soul, and conscience, whereto no rack, or outward torments is any way comparable.

7. I would further adde these extraordinary signs, and prodigies which do usually go before some stroke and judgment on a land, do they not clearly point at a divine hand

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in the same? For as these are a solemn forewarning from Heaven to give men an alarm, before remarkable changes, the truth whereof the World cannot deny, so we must say they are a convincing testimony, that these judgments are no casual things, which the Atheist cannot answer, it being so clear. 1. That such signes, and prodigies, have been in every age visible to the Worlds experience, and the gravest histories both of ancient, and later times, do fully witnes. 2. That such things should also be previous to great revolutions in the World, we know the Scripture is most expresse, *Joel. 2: ver. 30. Luk. 21: ver. 11.* And as we should guard against any superstitious respect, we would also beware of stupid Atheistical inadvertency at these strange works of the Lord, which call both for fear, and observation. 3. That such have been usually previous to great calamities, and judgments on a People, is a thing that all ages must witness, even these, who have been most cautious; and discerning in their time, who could not shun this as remark, Herodotus doth set that down as a thing most sure, in his sixth Book, *cum Deus puniturus est gentem, & urbem, prodigium id solet significare*, and Lucan could tell, what went before the Romans civil wares, ——— *Superique minaces Prodigis ter- ras implerunt*, yea, it can hardly be instanced any great change, or revolution in the earth, which hath not had some such extraordinary Herald going before. 4. Can the World deny how sometimes these prodigious signes have been shaped out to point at the very nature of the stroke then imminent, by a strange resemblance to the same, such as a flaming sword in the air, the appearance of armies fighting even sometimes upon the earth, to the view of many, most sober, and judicious onlookers, also showers of blood, the noise of drummes, and such like, which are known usually to go before warr, and commotions.

NINTH. That there are evil spirits, *Eph. 6:12. Rev. 20: ver. 2, 3.* and a Diabolical power such as the Scripture hath held forth, whose constant work is the ruin, and undoing of

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I confesse on this, tha lent, have t against infin and pleasure man. It sho Angels who party is at th up, and do to light a ca known, wi with, and prince of th how obvio where? T see many tra which in th are oft in th think huma ble, yea, l even been i there a grea and audibly with men? tion, I on truth this is sed, yea, gion, is he necessarily f

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of man, is a truth not onely witnessed from that experience Christians have of their assaults, but is undenyable by the world, and greatest Atheists except they deny the discovery of sense as well as reason.

I confesse it may cause fear, and astonishment to think on this, that spirits so knowing, and once originally excellent, have fallen thus into such an height of indignation against infinit goodnesse, that it is now their only aim, and pleasure to dishonor God, and destroy his image in man. It should indeed cause us fear him that spared not the Angels who sinned. But the truth it self is sure, that such a party is at this day, encompassing the earth, and trafficking up, and down there, to prove which by arguments were to light a candle to let men see that it is day, while it is known, what ordinary familiar converse many have therewith, and alace too easy to discern that power which the prince of this world hath upon the children of disobedience, how obvious are the marks of his conquest almost every where? Thousands lying in his chaines, how far do we see many transformed even to the very image of the Devil, which in these desperat prodigious acts of wickednes that are oft in the world may appear, such whereat we should think humane nature, though corrupt could not but tremble, yea, look on with horreur, how many in all ages have even been in an expresse covenant with them, and is not there a great part of the earth where the Devil is visibly, and audibly known where he hath a kind of neighbourhood with men? But there being no need for such a demonstration, I onely here aim to hold forth what a concerning truth this is, and of great consequence if seriously considered, yea, how both the Scripture, and Christian Religion, is hereby evidently confirmed since these things must necessarily follow.

1. That in this the Scripture is truly fulfilled which doth witnes what these Spirits are, adversaries to man, in their nature, and inclination desperatly evil, whose actings in the earth have a visible tendency to mens hurt, and

ruin, yea, their pretended favours, alwayes directed to that end, whence we see such a natural iobred horror which is in man against them.

2. That it is no common thing which they so much pursue, something more pretious then the body for which so great, and cruel an adversary is in continual labour, for their actings have no such tendency to ruin mens estate in the World; no, it is most evident this is the soul the immortal soul, to undoe them in that great interest, which is the mark whereat they level, that poor man might be sharer of that misery under which they are concluded.

3. Is it not an undenyable consequence of this truth that there must be an invisible World that hath inhabitants of another kinde then such as are here, that sure there is some being above man, yea a real correspondence betwixt men, and Spirits, and should not man thus placed in a midle estate betwixt the Angels and the beasts here below partaking in his body with the one, but in his reasonable soul with the other thence raise himselfe to thoughts of some more excellent condition for which he is framed, then a sensual life, and that surely the soul hath an interest in an other world which he should most look after?

4. Must not this also be sure that there is an invisible guard, & these desperat Spirits are under restraint by a power stronger then they, which can bound their malice, for, this may be certain that these who have so great enmity to man, are so near, and have such advantages over us could not keep at such a distance, but that they are kept in chaines by a higher power.

5. How is it that now by the Gospel and within this precinct of the Church, Sathans power is so much restrained in respect of former times, while it is known what a familiar converse they had with men, did even haunt their houses and were so publick in their appearance under such names of *Fairies*, and *Brounies* which since the breaking up of the light of the Gospel hath not been, yea hath not the Devil to this day an open throne and dominion in these parts of the earth where Christ is not worshiped; it is also

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known, how the oracles of old did cease, and that public worship which the world for many ages had given them, with the very time of Christs appearance, & breaking up of the Gospel these night beasts getting to their denes, when once the day was broke up. Plutarch and other heathen writers are a witnes to this.

5. Whence is it that within the Church where Sathan is most restrained, yet there he doth more stir then in all the world besides? Doth it not shew that that is the party with which he is at war, hence doth he more rage, the more clear the light shineth, yea, is there not seen something, besides mens natural enmity at the truth, even a fury, and violence wherewith some are visibly driven in their actings with such an unsatiabie cruelty against the followers of Christ, without the least shadow of provocation as holds forth a vive resemblance of the Devil, and some violent pressure, and incitement from that airth.

7. Is it not sure that there is such a party, by this, that he is an adversary to God, and holines, for which he doth so impetuously tempt, and presse men to the outward acts of sin, yea, that there is a Spirit of blasphemy which so visibly rageth in the world; and acts men to war against Heaven with their tongues by cursing, and blasphemous oathes which hath no carnal pleasure or gain, but yet, can not forbear, from a violent incitement which may be seen swaying to the same.

8. Whence is it which is so very known and notour that these horrid wretches who give themselves to the Devil cannot enter in any formal engadgement without renouncing Christ, and their baptisme, doth it not shew that direct opposition he stands in to Christ; yea to the very name and shadow of Christianity?

9. Whence is it that even the grossest Atheists upon any appearance of the Devil, or apprehension from that airth will not then make scorn of prayer, but turns in earnest to that, which at other times they mocked. O doth it not shew mens Atheism is their judgement, that not onely there is a dreadful horrour, and fear which by nature men have
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of these evil Spirits, but some inbred sense also, and impression of a Deity, which doth bewray it self whither they will, or not, in a pressing strait, and extremity.

TENTH. That there is such an enmity betwixt the seed of the woman, and the Serpent as the Scripture hath held forth is very manifest, a truth wherein the world may see the Scripture clearly verified. Gal. 4: ver. 29.

It is truly strange that this putteth not men to more serious thoughts, to pursue such a thing to its true rise, what should cause such a violent, & unreasonable contrainy against the way, and followers of God; for here upon grave reflections they must needs see that their way in this is a convincing witness to the truth of the Scripture, which might put them in some other humor, yea, help to turn this poison into an antidote against it self, but this is sure, and undenyable, the discovery where of cannot but stare the greatest Atheist in the face, from these convincing evidences.

1. That it is seen no privat quarrel which ever was among men hath been with such vigour, and malice pursued as this upon the account of religion, which hath still put the World more in a flame, then any privat interest, yea, it is very manifest how men are carried with the spite of their own natural inclination, to oppose the Church, and People of God.

2. That this feud, and enmity could never be taken up through all the successions of time, a strife which is not late begun, to be seen only in one age, betwixt the children of the bond woman, and of the free, no, the most sage, and wise amongst men the greatest Peace-makers, could yet never fall on a way to reconcile these two parties; but the children have still served themselves heirs to the quarrel, and hatred of their fathers against the Church.

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hold a little up with the form of religion, yet, will break forth in greatest rage against the power thereof when once it begins to appear ! it is indeed here, that imbred contrariety which is in men against holines, doth bewray it selfe, even, in these who are otherwayes noted for a calm, and peaceable disposition; while once they begin to be scorcht with its heat.

4. What strong natural antipathy is this which causeth men pursue with so much bitterness these from whom they never had any personal injury ? sure their conscience must oft tell that they have no reason, or any other provocation then what is from the appearance of the image of God in such, but this is their nature and disposition, an enmity which they can no more help, then they can change their nature, or the Leopard can change its spots.

5. From what a strong inclination, and inward principle doth the World thus act in its opposition to the Church and followers of God ? whilest it is clear, though these were never so quiet and peaceable, yet their enemies are still restless, and cannot sleep beside them.

6. It is seen how this doth separat betwixt nearest friends, and relations, and alineat such who have sometimes been most dear to other, no bond in nature so strait which it will not break, it doth oft set the husband against the wife and the parents against the children, yea, when religion once breaks up in a corner of a land or a family, doth it not then make a visible jarr, and put all in a flame ?

7. It is clear that when once grace appeareth in men they are as a sign, and wonder to a profane generation, the World doth then sensibly change her countenance, & looketh like a step-mother; while on the other hand it is clear that professors turning loose and running to that excess of riot with others, will cause their old adversaries warm towards them, and alace, proveth the surest way to gain mens friendship while the World thinks, they are their own, when once they turn profane.

ELEVENTH. That the Creature is made subject to vanity because

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because of sin. which not onely the wisest of men but the Spirit of God, doth witnes that things here beneath the sun, are indeed vanity, and vexation of spirit, *Rom. vii. ver. 20. Eccl. 2: vtr. 11.* is a piece of the Scripture in such great letters written forth to the view of men, that none can be strangers thereto.

It is true the cause, and solid remedy of this so general complaint, is only reached by the Godly man, who knoweth how to read the vanity of the creature, as a piece of the fulfilling of the word, and doth seriously consider, things as they are and not as they appear, but it is also sure, that in every age through the various changes of mans life this is so clearly witnessed, that the most grosse, and brutish, cannot shift the conviction thereof, but in one of these two times have been forced to a publick acknowledging of the same, at death, when they are leaving the World, or in a day of strait when the World is leaving them, now to demonstrat this I shall here but offer these few queries.

1. Have not the greatest instances of the glory of the World, been usually the greatest examples of its vanity, and change? How few hath ambition raised, but it hath also ruined, yea given the forest fall to these it had lifted most high? What sudden changes do attend great men, and high places, which these who sit low do escape, sure if the tragedies of Princes, and such who in their condition have been raised above others were put by themselves in record, it should make a great volume, and shew how their glory, and prosperous estate did only make their fall the more observable.

2. Is it not obvious what a fraile dying disposition is in all wordly things, that even the greatest Kingdoms, and politick bodies, to maintain which neither policy, nor strength was wanting, yet like natural bodies of men had their inevitable periods, their youth, and flourishing times, their declining, and old age, and at last even brought

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brought to their grave; hath not the glory of greatest Empires, and Monarchies sunk in the dust? yea, scarce a heap of stones left this day to tell us where once famous cities have stood, *Nunc Seges est ubi Troja fuit*, the ruines whereof, and such excellent pieces of the World doth clearly shew that certain dissolution of the whole fabrick at last.

3. What a small distance we may see betwixt extremities in outward things, even greatest plenty, and poverty, the highest place, and a low condition, so that the morning hath seen some happy, and flourishing in the World whom the evening hath seen miserable, and in a most short time, such who have been objects of envy, and admiration, made the object of mens contempt, and pity, yea, have so suddenly disappeared, have sunk into so little bounds, that men have been put narrowly to consider them, and with admiration ask, are these they who were once a terrour in the land of the living, and their place hath not been found who a few dayes before seemed to place themselves alone in the midst of the earth?

4. What else is it but the very present moment of time that maketh such a difference betwixt the rich and poor, since as to what is past, and the bygone time mens happiness, and misery may be reckoned as though it had never been, *Nam quicquid retro est mors tenet*, and who but a fool would boast of that which is to come, a thing so uncertain? this onely is sure that a few dayes will make all conditions equal, when the bones of the rich, and the dust of greatest Princes will not be discernable from these of the poor man.

5. Is there any thing so pleasant which hath not a worm at the root thereof, a moth which naturally breeds in the most satisfying enjoyments that quickly eats out the heart thereof, and blasts their hope before the harvest? How oft is greatest longing in the pursuit of things turned to loathing, and weariness when obtained, because it is not the nature of the thing so much as an humor, and the novelty thereof that maketh them pleasant, hence many sensual
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men have turned Monastick, and greatest Monarches become melancholy, yea, how usual is it for many to survive their pleasures, and bury their joy, and delights in the World even before themselves, while nothing remains of all their former enjoyments but some sad sighs, and groanes with a heavy fair well.

6. Is it not found that riches, and abundance of the earth doth load more then it fills, and mens wealth only further heighten their wants? How very poor are some amidst their fulnes, more then these who earn their bread with sore labour, whom the world doth wholly possesse, while they do not all possesse it, neither is it in their power to make use of that they have, yea, are they not sick and dy in Princes courts, as well as in the meanest cottage, and the complaints of the great, and rich usually more then these of the poor? Sure it is known that the great man doth oftner want a stomack, and rest, then the poor want meat and a bed to ly in.

7. In what an endlesse circle do voluptuous men move, from one thing to another in a perpetual search after other enjoyments to satisfy their spirits? which sheweth what a great want is ther, which still calls for variety of things, and some fresh supply, to take off the wearinesse of one pleasure by another, else the delight they have therein would quickly languish and wear out; yea is it not still found that the best of outward things are not on a near approach what they seemed to be at a distance, the eye not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing, but the more they are pressed the lesse they yeeld, neither do they enjoy such things with most satisfaction who take a full draught, who wallow, and steep themselves in their enjoyments, being more in expectation then in possession, so that sometime mens attaining their desire hath caused their delight, and pleasure in these things cease.

8. It is also clear that outward things are incident to the worst without making them the better, and separable from the best without making them the worse, and what can silver, or gold sute an immortal soul, or answer such a

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capacity, more then vertue, and godlines could answer to fill an empty chest, or glasse bottle?

9. How rare is it for men to get their lot in the World brought up to their desire? But are still at some jar with their present condition, so that oft there needs no more to turn men discontent, but the thought of some lot, which they apprehend more satisfying then their own, the want whereof turns them more disquiet then all their enjoyments are pleasing, yea, it is also evident many mens labour, and disquiet doth increase with their wealth, and turns the flame more violent, and that even in the condition of the poor there is something the great man is made to envy, while the poor may find cause oftimes to pity, and compassionate some great men in the midst of their prosperous estate.

10. What is the enjoying of the best of the earth, but its very passing away, while it perisheth in the present use? And what? Are not men going through the World and leaving it behind them in the midst of their most satisfying enjoyments? Is not the excellency of most outward things onely according to opinion, or the institution of men while they have but small intrinsick worth from their own quality; in some parts of the earth; whitenesse is reckoned deformity, and the blakest collour the greatest beauty, and therefore they paint the Devil white? what a poor smoke is swelling titles of honour if soberly weighed? while the proud mans happines, doth some way hang upon the poor who goe by, which they must beg from others with the greatest artifice; and would the choicest jewels; or a bag of gold laid upon the heart of a dying man, any way quiet his spirit, or ease his pain? Surely this is vanity.

11. Is it not oft seen amidst the various changes of the earth, Princes and great men walking on foot, and servants riding on horsback, the Children oft put to ask an almes from such who have served their fathers? fooles loaded with wealth, and great stiles, while men of the choicest spirit, are buried under contempt, and poverty, yea doe we not see how quickly men are cryed up, and
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down in the World? That which in one age is raised, is oft rased in another, yea, many at much labour to undoe that which others have done with greatest care, and expence, what a sore vanity is this?

12. Will not the want of a very small thing oft embitter the pleasantest lot, and turn it into wormwood, and gall? the smallest touch of pain, the gravel, or took-ake, yea, even some melancholy thought will make men disrelish all their present enjoyments, what torment doth a small ruffle, and affront oft prove to the proud man even in the midst of his glory? is it not also found, how carnal mirth, and joy, men wallowing in the delights of the World, hath still in the close a bitter sting and harsh waygate, which the shadow attends the body is the native, and unseparable consequent thereof, and surely that may be easy to discern, there is no condition, which can want a crosse or some mixture of discontent, even where there is least seen cause.

I would adde which cannot want remark in every time, that while men seem to be at the top, and furthest period of their thoughts, and projects, have things according to their desire brought to some happy close, they are oft then upon some turn, and change in their condition, either by death or some very sad crosse, and even in that day their thoughts have perished, truly such as are wise observers of the World, and of the course of things therein may oft see, how usual a tryft this is that when there is too bright a sun-blinck in outward prosperity, if great sobriety and moderation do not accompany the same it is an ominous, and fatal presage of a storm, and *ad summum quicquid venit, ad exitum prope est.*

TWELFTH. There is this truth, which hath in all ages been cleerly witnessed, even to the conviction of the World, *that the end of the upright man is peace*, and integrity what ever rub it may seem to have by the way, yet, hath a sweet and comfortable close, *Psal. 37: 37.*

This is an undeniable truth not only because the saints are then entring into perfect peace, but it is also clear that
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how ever the godly man may have very sharp assaults in the close of his dayes, and some who have shined very bright do set in a dark cloud, their evening full of sorrow, and bitternes, yea, their reflexion on some sad slip which they have made by the way, bearing them company even to the grave, yet, this truth is still verifed, yea, may be discernable to the conviction of bystanders, that integrity, and an upright walk hath much peace in the end, and doth land men upon a comfortable harbour, anent which I can appeal the World, and the most ordinary onlookers if this hath not been oft very convincing, and discernable to them, from many instances of the Lords usual way with these who have been faithful in their generation at ther death, from that testimony which they have then given to this, yea, from most visible signes & evidences hereof even upon their countenance, and carriage whilest it is seen.

1. How great an advantage such use to have above others, when Death approacheth, so that it hath not been Balaams wish alone to dy the death of the righteous and to have his latter end like theirs, but the worst of men are still forced to witnesse their respect to the lot of a dying Christian, and would wish a share thereof when it comes to their turn, anent which I may ask the greatest mockers at Religion, and at the life of a Godly man, if they can possibly shun this conviction, that surely such are of the best estate, and at the greatest advantage, in their end.

2. This I am sure cannot be hid from the World what abundant peace the saints do then testify in their choice, what a present unspeakable complacency they have with this that they valued Christ above all other advantages, did chose affliction rather then sin, and now while they are turning their face to the wall, finds the witnes of a good conscience, and of Gods approbation so sweet a feast, that their joy, and peace on this account, they cannot smother or keep in but declare to all who stand by what they find, and truly it hath been oft seen, how, the

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inward joy which some of these have had hath exceeded their outward pain, been more sensible to them then their sicknesse, yea, have been in leaving the World much more chearful then these whom they left behind.

3. It is also known, and may be very obvious to bystanders, how with a sweet composure, and recumbency of soul such have laid themselves upon the promise, in that houre, while they were grappling with the king of terrors, their spirit then quiet, and calme, having taken the truth, and testimony of God for their shield, and buckler, which may tell the World what an other kinde of security, and confidence these have beyond others, yea, that surely the ground on which this confidence is founded, must be a thing that is able to bear out the greatest storm, and assault, and is something above nature.

4. Is it not clear that even an untimely, and violent death, could not let, or frustrate that peace which integrity causeth in the close? For innumerable instances can witness what marvellous joy, and satisfaction the Saints have shewed at a stake, and upon a scaffold, and thence have had more chearful going out of time, then the rich man streched upon his soft bed, or the greatest Monarch, amidst all outward advantages; sure we must say that sweet refreshing close of the upright man, hath never been more visible, and writ in greater letters, then in such a case.

5. What very sad conflicts have some of the Saints had in their life, yea, even upon the setting of the sun have been put to cry out through sore perplexing feares, and doubts wherewith they have been assaulted, who have at last had this turned into a song, and such a marvellous change in their case, as hath not been more sensible to themselves, then discernable to all onlookers, like a sudden calm, and sunshin, after some dark storm. I must here ask the Atheist, and such as reckon Godlinesse but a fancy whence should so strange, so sudden, and great alteration proceed, that these who a little before were under such horrow could have

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have no rest, no arguments could do their turn, doe thus witnes the abundant peace of their souls yea, which is oft seen that fervent desire wherewith some of the Saints are taken away, the very lustre of heaven being upon their countenance, how marvellous and piercing are their words, which may clearly tell that now they feel, they see, and have got some glance of that, which onlookers cannot reach, though they cannot deny an acknowledgment of this.

6. Must not the World grant, yea, the greatest enemies to godlines allow this charity that sure this peace and joy which such have witnessed at death can be no counterfeit, that there is no temptation could thus byass them to deceive others, and themselves in a matter of such high concernment; and at a time when it is expected the grossest of men would speak truth, yea, that this doth appear, while men cannot in the least charge the dying Christian with any distemper in his judgment, but while they have been most composed, stayed, and present in minde, and as to other things of their concernment, most deliberat and sober; even then they have born this witnes.

(¶) Since that peace, and joy, which integrity hath in the close of the day, when the Saints are dying is undeniable, even to the conviction of the World, I would adde something anent that great truth, *The immortality of the soul, and its subsisting after death*, to which this joy, when the Christian is finishing his course hath a special respect, and is a truth, wherein the Scriptures accomplishment, and the certainty of that blessed record, may be convincingly witnessed, and demonstrat to the World, for it is thus, (I mean by the light of the Scripture) that life and immortality is brought to light, and made known to the sons of men. I know this seems so common and uncontroverted a thing an after-being of the soul, and its eternal subsistence, that to say more, then the naming of it may be looked on as impertinent; But oh, how unknown a truth is it! of which there needs no more to shew the little solid perswasion men have, but that it is so usually past with

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so few, and these very common thoughts; it is not indeed much questioned, not because it is believed, and men are sure thereof, but because they are not in earnest about such a thing; it concerns the World to keep a distance from a through knowing of that, which would be their torment to know; and there is cause for this sad regrate within the Church, that the most great and fundamental truths wherein our comfort is most concern'd, are usually least studied; but O should it not put us to other thoughts if we could have a serious look of this; it may truly be said the better part is so buried in the worst part, that until men are dying few lay this to heart, that their souls must live forever, yea must once part fellowship with the body, and enter in another World, and an unknown state until the resurrection; what I intend here is only a short touch at this great truth as it is a convincing witness to the Scripture and the accomplishment thereof; anent which I would offer these three to be considered. 1. How express and clear a testimony the Scripture gives to this. 2. On what plain and undeniable grounds of reason this truth is demonstrable to the world. 3. How great a thing it is to believe and be assuredly perswaded thereof; for it seems men rather dream then have their judgments seriously exercised, or are in earnest about such a thing.

As to the first, It is undeniable that not only the Scripture holds this forth, but that there only men have a clear, and right discoverie of it, It is indeed known, what glances the world hath had of this, yea, what hath been write thereon, by some whose sole guide was the light of nature, in this search; But it is no less evident, how very dark and uncertain, these have been; they could not shift some conviction thereof, but it was through a dark cloud, and as some pleasant dream, they looked thereon; because they did not know its rise and original, and what the end was to which in its actings, it ought to be directed; they knew not what its after-condition could truly mean, thence with such wavering and uncertainty do they express their thoughts, I do not here mean the schools of Epicurus only,

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only, to whom the soul was but a complexion of atomes, but ye see how perplexed and uncertain both Aristotle and others of these famous ancients have shew'd themselves anent this, which speaks out more some perplex and disorder'd notion, which they could not ward off, then any clear and certain discovery which they had on solid grounds thereof, for they knew not the Scripture, where its original, whence it is, and whether it must return, are so clearly held forth. *Ecc. 12: ver. 7.* And you may further see, *Heb. 12: 9. Gen. 2: 7. Luk. 16: 22, 23. 1 Pet. 3: 9.*

2. This grave testimonie, which the Scripture of God do's bear to such a truth, may be also held forth to the world from such a clear and rational demonstration, that the most brutish of men can hardly sink so far into the condition of a beast, to deny they have a never-dying soul, which will not go to the dust or inherit corruption with the body; I should be loath to borrow so much of your time, by any discourse, on a subject which by others hath been so much handled, for which there are many, many arguments, unanswerably demonstrative of this truth, both Physical and moral; yet having mentioned it I cannot altogether pass the same without a touch at some few, that may be most convincing and obvious. 1. If you should question the being and subsistence of the soul after death, yow must also deny its frame, that it is a simple, immaterial and active substance, which hath neither quantitie nor parts, and is not compounded of any principles, and therefore can be resolved to none. 2. Do but consider, if the soul have no cause of corruption, and from no contraries can suffer opposition, as the body do's, through the prevalencie of heat or cold, how should it then admit of a dissolution with the body; for you know generation and corruption they are by contraries, and if you argue from any natural cause it must surely be one of two, which makes the soul partake with the body, in its decay and muldering downe; either a dependence on matter, as the soul of the beast hath, which is but a material form, or a conflict from contrary qualities, which you

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know helps the bodies wasting and its fall; but I think you would not so far contradict reason to alleadge any of these anent the soul of man. 3. Consider if by these diseases, to which the body is subject, the soul is not reached, must it not also have a distinct existence from it, and I am sure yow must grant the soul doth not directly suffer from any outward diseases, but the body may be under unexpressible pain and anguish when there is a sweet calme and serenity within. 4. Do's not this witness that the soul lyes not a dying with the body, nor falls with it since it suffers no decrease, but is found strong and vigorous in its actings when the flesh is brought low, and on a visible decay, yea, is it not at the greatest advantage in its exercise and discerning, the more separat from the body, and sensible things, now, it is sure that cannot be destructive to the soul in its being, which is so subservient to it in its operation, I think these who ever observed the joy and peace of a dying Christian and the excellent frame, and composure of their soul, under a pained and languishing body, through many diseases, may clearly see this truth, and there read a lecture of the immortality of the soul. 5. Will you consider, can the soul of man, have a dependence on the body in its being, when it do's no way depend thereon in its acting and exercise; for it is sure it do's truly act, yea hath a clear ratiocination even when the body sleeps, and O do's it not prove that this soul, that is found waking when the other is asleep, must have a distinct subsistence, and live when it dies. 6. If you admit that there are Spirits and incorporeal beings, which do act without a body, and yet have a true and reall subsistence can you doubt or question, the existing of the soul, or its exercising the faculties thereof without the body, though you do not reach how this should be; and if there be indeed a converse and intercourse betwixt us and Spiritual beings, yea, a truth in fellowship with God the Father of Spirits, O may not this satisfyingly demonstrat that existence and acting of the soul, even when the body is at a distance and in the grave. 7. Consider, that which you must grant hath a dominion and præ-

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minence over the body, by its making a rational choise of good when it is most crosse to the desire and delight of the flesh, yea cannot only determine it to endure most grievous torments, but do's oft witness a special delectation therein, must it not be something truly distinct from the body which can have a subsistence without it? Now this I am sure you will not deny that there is such a dominion over the flesh and a captivating of it to the law of the minde, which the most sensual and brutish will not deny in many instances how little acquaintance soever they have with it themselves. 8. Since there is a discoverie and knowledge of things, not only above the reach and impressions of sense, but even contrary thereto, that men do rationally judge and assent to truths which truly contradicts their senses, as the rotundity of the earth, which seems to us a plain, &c. O do's it not shew this soul in man, which can so far soar above the earth, and do's so far exceed the body, must be of a more excellent mould, and something truly different from it; I shall but adde what means that war and struggling which to every Christian is known betwixt the flesh and the Spirit, yea to every man is known betwixt him, and his natural conscience, what means these reflex acts of the soul on its self, these marvellous products of the understanding, and new discoveries, why are men so anxious and concern'd about their surviving name, which is a most poore airie accident not worth the regarding, if there were a destruction of the whole? what means that marvellous deportment of so many martyres for the truth that they should shew such a joy and satisfaction amidst their torments, as though they had no bodies, the pleasure of the soul so far overcoming the pain of the flesh? what means so universal a consent to this truth, that these who hate and feare it, yet cannot be rid thereof? and I must also ask, how are the choise and the excellent of the earth, so oft crush'd, under the feet of their oppressours, whilst these wretches do oft wallow in all satisfying outward delights, yea sometimes goe hence without bands in their death, in a word, O what is it that makes so vast a difference betwixt men and

beasts, since these you see have a sensual life, want not some natural sagacity, and have their enjoyments by the senses as well as man.

3. Let us consider how great and astonishing a truth this is; O immortallie do men beleeve it? the souls surviving the body, and that condition wherein it will enter, and yet have so few thoughts thereof, for this is a matter of such concernment, that may turn much of our life in a continued wondering; I must say can this be believed, our having an immortal soul, which is of a more excellent nature, and inestimable value then these visible heavens, sun moon and stars, for which no less then the blood of him who was truly God could ransom from everlasting wrath, and yet we put so small a price thereon; Is it indeed believed by men whilst they are so hote in their pursute after the world, since here is a question may silence all flesh, what should it availe a man to gain, were it the whole world, when it is purchased with the losing of the soul; it is sure there is no imaginable proportion betwixt that and a piece of red earth, or betwixt a few years of time and long eternity; I remember a passage of worthy *Mr. Blair* our own countrey man, who the first time he heard *Mr. Bruce* preach, said, the fame of so great a man caused him expect some thing very extraordinary from him; but his whole Sermon did press this truth of the souls being immortal, and that it was a great thing to believe it; he confessed it did at first someway amuse him, why he dwelt so much upon so known and common a subject; but after he found it was some other thing then appears at the first looke, for which men may dispute and tosse it as a notion in the schools, who never knew what it was to believe the truth thereof; and that a serious impression of it on the heart is something else then a swimming in the head, by some ordinary speculation of this; O what a truth, and what astonishing should it cause if men would but sometimes goe alone and consider. 1. What it is they have thus held out to them, and how great a change is before them, which ere many days must be in their condition, when once that

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strange step is passed, betwixt time and another world which they can step but once. 2. That this marvelous change is truly neer; time making long steps, the vessel under full sail, which carries forward men whether they sleep or wake to that port; for it is sure this cannot be long deferred, and it is very unsure, but this night thy soul may be required. 3. That this change must be in a moment, in the very twinkling of an eye, and no interval, but a present entering of the soul into that after-state, which shall then put the Christian in the fulness of an inconceivable joy, in the immediat presence of God, in the embracements of the Mediator, amongst the angels, and spirits of the just made perfect; but one moment also must put others out of their sensual pleasures and delights, the Prince off his throne, and these who have been wallowing in the world down to these dark and horrid prisons, where with the ceasing of this worlds melody, they are forthwith met with that horrid noise and howling of the Devils and of all the company of the damned. 4. Oh! if men would consider, what thoughts they shall then have in another world of that other world, and what other thoughts of their former state and condition; how far they will finde this beyond all they ever thought or conceived at a distance. 5. Should it not cause astonishment to think seriously on this great change, which admits no after change, but that there long eternity is the true measure of the souls duration after death; O what a long breathing word to be ever ever blessed or miserable, where the one hath no fear and can goe no more out, and the other no hope, or possibility thereof; the hope of the hireling is not there, that he may change his master at the next terme, for these gates are everlastingly shut, by the decree of him who alters not.

Now to shut up this argument, I shall offer one instance more, wherein the world may see the truth of the Scripture; and therewith of a divine providence convincingly demonstrat, if prejudice did not draw a vail and obstruct so excellent a discovery, it is this, *That the way of God is perfect.* Psal. 18. ver. 30. *and that his works are perfect and his wayes*

wayes judgment. Deut. 32. v. 4. *yea, that he do's all things well.* Mark. 7. ver. 37. which testimony then the multitude was forced to bear to this great truth, and O how great a truth is it! which can be said neither of Angels nor men, but to him hath a peculiar respect, even to him alone, in whose way there is nothing crooked, no mistake no inequality, nothing too much, or superfluous, nothing out of due time that is either too soon, or too late, nothing incongruous, nothing misplaced, yea, in all he do's nothing which is not best done, which any could rectify or make better, but in every piece of his worke leaves matter of wonder behind, and thus declares himself to be God; I know this is a truth the World cannot well bear, but pretends a visible contradiction from the great disorder that things here seem to be in, for men will oppose to this, what a miscarrying there is of instruments, what a strange emergency there is of most grievous and cross accidents, the most promising means frequently blasted, yea how good and evil is so strangely interweaved, and is not the present day oft undoing the work and labour of the former; yet whatever the World can say to darken this great truth, *That the way of the Lord is absolutely perfect*, it must shine; yea, it do's not want clearness when by a thick interposition betwixt us and the same, there may be need of clearing it, the sun ceases not to shine when the clouds obstruct its brightness as to us, O that these who will debate so great a truth, would but come neer, and by a serious perpending, consider the work of the Lord, then should they see so much in the dayly tract and administration of providence, yea, even in most ordinary passages thereof, that might areast their spirit with astonishment, the discovery whereof they shun by keeping a distance with it.

I shall touch a little this demonstration, how this piece of divine truth is verified and write out in the event, to the observation of the World, that they who cannot spiritually discern the same, yet have so much witnessed to dazzle their eyes, and force this acknowledgment, that the way of the Lord is perfect, and he hath done all things well; and

and for clearing few, yet so they reach not in he most en but takes in here under th this truth.

First you n Lord is perfect of Christ her astonishing p exquisite hum glory, that it is within observation times are in whole, the ble of hum that helps t also may be mers; yet v the Church ing marks o forc't the W that sight w Psal. 48. t and the pr was known both in the preservation more than consider th great and f all things ar it. 1. Yo even that Scripture o unless m

and for clearing, I would offer some particulars, though few, yet so very comprehensive that in a large measure they reach not only these great works of God, wherein he most eminently declares himself about the Church, but takes in also the most ordinary things of providence, here under the sun, and therein demonstrates the certainty of this truth.

First you may see this clearly verified, that *the way of the Lord is perfect, in the whole frame, and structure of the Church of Christ here*, which is made a great wonder, and an astonishing piece of the work of God, beyond the most exquisite humane contrivance, that ever was; it is true her glory, that do's most affect the eye, and ravish the heart, it is within, and lyes not in the common road of mens observation, yea, some parts of this excellent body of times are in such a disorder, as darkens the beauty of the whole, there is such an intermixture of the hay and stubble of humane inventions, with this choise building, that helps to mar its order and beauty, the carved work also may be spoil'd and broken down, as with axes and hammers; yet with all these disadvantages, there is a glory on the Church of Christ, an awful Majesty, such convincing marks of its grandour, even under its ruins, as have forc't the World, and the great men thereof, to consider that sight with wonder, and amazement, which yow see *Psalm. 48.* they saw, they marvelled, and hasted away, and the preceeding words gives clear reason, for God was known in her palaces for a refuge they saw something both in the grandour and frame of the Church, and in her preservation, that forc't them to see that it was something, more than humane. Now to clear this a little, do but consider these few instances, wherein you may see the great and stupendious fabrick of the Church, and how all things are there well ordered by him who hath framed it. 1. You may see on what a sure foundation it is built, even that of the Prophets, and Apostles, which is the Scripture of God, whereon as it is manifestly founded, it is no less marvellously united and joyned together in Jesus Christ,

Christ, who is the chief corner stone; will you seriously consider the forme of the house, and the fashions thereof, its goings out and comings in, with all its ordinances, and there you may see how marvellously exact and uniforme this building is. 2. Is it not likewise obvious that the Church thus sely joined together and knit by all that the joynts do supply in its whole complex frame groweth up as a building to the Lord? Yea is there not a very strait union and correspondence betwixt all the parts thereof in the same faith and worship, that though divided in so many parcels through the World, yet is still one intire body, the union whereof the variety of members and these of such various syzes, that great inequality amongst them in their growth the remornes of place, different languages, exil or change of countreys, yet cannot break off that neer ty, that joins the Church of Christ together. 3. What a wonderful contrivance is it which is in the World, yet not of it, that spreads it self among the Nations, yet loseth not its own distinct being, is mixed with humane societies, yet an inclosure and incorporation by her self; a fountain of sweet waters sealed, though surrounded with this great salt Ocean of the world, is made up of many particular Churches yet every part homogeneous and of the same nature with the whole, and though it seems to be open to sore assaults, yet is a defenced city, which is impaled, hath both her walls and watchmen, her bulwarks and strong towers. 4. This is of such a frame, that is both visible and invisible, yet not two distinct Churches, though under diverse considerations it comprehends both without any jar, and hath communion with Jesus Christ as her head, for life standing related to him as his mystical body, and yet as a visible politick body, is related also to him, as its supreme head, by a political government and guidance, and hath an expresse charter granted for its exteats and rights. 5. This must be said of it, though black, yet comely; though it do's not want some spots they do not so far mar her beauty, but that in all its several administrations there appears a singular grace; it hath indeed

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its blemishes and failings, yet every measure and degree thereof do's not forefault her relation rights and priedges. 6. Is it not a marvellous frame, which do's not want a corrupt mixture, yet in its rule and constitution do's allow no corruption; and though many are found gross within, yet do's it difference berwixt the precious and the vile, yea shuts its gates as well as it opens, and is no more tender and easy in her admission, then awful and authoritative in her rejection. 7. Is so well constitutèd, that all her officers hich their appointment, and each their work and charge designed, yet no greater variety of service and imployments then there is of gifts, which from her head are dispensed and sired to the same. 8. She is of such a mould and frame that though she can boast of an intrinsick power, within herself, yet must derive it from another fountaine, yea, must have a directory and rule from her supreme head and lawgiver for exercising the acts of that power, which also hath its proper object even the inward man, and its peculiar end, the edification of the body, to which this power and the exercise thereof is directed. 9. This is such a body, the members whereof are indeed subject to the magistrat, and denies no due obedience to that power, yet without any subordination or subjecting of the Church as such to an humane power, and though it hath not its authority or jurisdiction from men, it denies no just respect to these; it do's binde and loose upon the earth which no humane power can make void; and though cast in among the nations, yet by peculiar bounds is kept from all other societies distinct; she hath her judicatories, and there, a subordination of the lesser to the greater, yet no allowed preeminence and inequality amongst her officers; yea, though her government is truly monarchick with respect to her head, for there is but one supreme Lord, yet with respect to the servants and officers it is a most excellent well tempered aristocracy, which holds off these gradual differences of power and greatnes amongst them, which is so much in use amongst the nations; In a word, O will you consider this choise

choise and exquisite frame, and you will see how both tendernes and severity doth here concur, what a healing there is here in her sharpest rebukes and censures; whilst a privat essay, for gainings, is to go before a publick and judicial procedure, yea her authoritative determinations without prejudice to the judgment of Christian prudence and discretion, which belongs to every one of her members: Consider also how she wears not out, but hath still a spring after the winter, hath both her signes and her seasons, and whilst see is losing, and in a decay as to particular members, she is still travelling in birth for a new spring and succession: O that they who stand a far would but come neer and seriously look on this rare piece of work, *Go about Zion, consider well her towers and bulwarks, &c.* that you may see this is a fabrick the Lord hath founded, and raised up and that surely this piece of the word is therein fulfilled, *His way is perfect, and he do's all things well.*

Second. Is not this great truth clearly demonstrat, not only in the frame, but in the whole conduct, and administration of providence, about the Church, which is indeed one of the most marvellous discoveries, we have of God here; yea even to the world, is oft convincingly obvious, through what a varietie of dispensations, he useth to bring forth his work, and makes his way oft break out of the bosome of a dark cloud; yea, so unexpectedly can make these perplexed changes, with which the Church militant is tossed resolve in such a satisfying close, that it may be seen they were all directed for his interest and advantage: I know this is a great deep, and we cannot have such a discovery of the providence of God about the Church, nor reach the meaning of things in their first mould, as in their after-tendencie, and product, O that marvelous sight which shall once be when that great work of providence, that now is put over in the hand of the Mediator, hath in perfect close, and the whole frame and contexture set up together as one entire piece to look upon, that is now by several pieces, and through a various succession of ages

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carried on: yet we must say, the Lord herein comes so neer, even in the darkest times, and makes the glorie of this truth in such a measure shine forth, that may convincingly witness to any ordinarie observers the way of the Lord is *perfect* in all that he do's; I shall here offer some few things that in everie time are obvious to these who take pleasure in such a discoverie, and desire not to keep at a distance therewith. 1. Must it not be said of his way; that he do's nothing in vain, but makes all things congruous to his end, even things that amongst themselves do's most cross one another, do's he not carrie on his designe by the miscarrying of instruments, and brings forth his greatest works by midses most small and contemptible? I know the world would object, they can see no such thing, and indeed providence cannot be understood; or the meaning thereof by one look; but I must ask, do you discern the motion of the hand upon the clock, even whilst it is certainly going forward; yet when it come's to the houre and strikes you will see it was then moving: It is sure there are such periods, that providence hath, where its meaning do's not clearly break up, until then that it comes to the striking of the houre, if we may so say; and then the most stupide are forc't to observe what once seem'd most improbable, in the way of the Lord. 2. Is it not also obvious how the Lord doth ensnare men in the work of their own hand? and turns their wrath unto his praise, how he takes the wise and outwits them by their counsels, makes events fall out contraire to the second causes, frustrats the most promising means, and by things unknown and unthought upon, do's oft bring forth the deliverance of the Church; yea how out of shame and reproach he do's even bring about his glorie; sure these are not so far in the dark that in any age the world can altogether pretend ignorance thereof, and is not his way perfect, of which such things can be said? 3. Have we not this discovery how the Church is oft fed by the rod, yea, under that appears with such advantage, that it may be said her meat hath been brought forth out of the eater, how usually is her

mercy and enlargement prepared for her, by the sharpest down casting, is humbled in order to an upraising and deliverance, yea oft is one step of the way of the Lord made clear to her by another; O is not here so excellent and marvellous a method, that all the wit and invention of the world cannot follow.

4. His way is indeed perfect, and by an infinite wisdom managed, which do's at once, and by the very same providence reach so many several designs, yea bring forth such various and contraire effects, that no humane reason could ever judge the result and conclusion by the premises, how severity, and mercy should be at once brought forth, a more full stroke on the adversary, by their further raising, yea by a long forbearance of that stroke; how he should also make use of the same mean both for humbling and proving, and to do his people good in the latter end: O how perfect must his way be, where all the steps thereof, and after product would seem repugnant yet no real jar; for the Church sinking yet do's not perish, in a flame, yet not consumed, but is thereby kept alive, brought under the yoke of the oppressour to make her grow and flourish, is wounded and smitten for her further healing, and a witness of his tenderness to her thereby; hath a greater weight and burden put on, to give her thus ease and enlargement, yea, is chastned and trusted with suffering to prevent suffering, that she may rest in the day of trouble; sure these are a part of the wayes, of God, and may be visibly demonstrat in the conduct of his providence about the Church even to the conviction of the world; but oh! it is hard to see where men will shut their eyes. 5. Is it not obvious, what strange things do sometime fall in betwixt the beginning and close of some special piece of providence about the Church, that do pass humane reach to give a present reason for the same; yet in all these may there not be discerned a remarkable dependence and connection of things, how in such a variety of cross events, and in a long continued tract of providence, every thing falls in aright, in its own place, yea every step, every circumstance

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so proportioned by a marvelous disposal, and conduct thereof, to suite an other, for making the whole complex providence beautiful; that on a serious review the world must confess, this is a concatenation so strange, that must be his work and his alone, who sees things from the beginning to the end. 6. How perfect is his way who can hasten, and dispatch his work by delays, and when he seems to take a long circuit in bringing about his designe, yet loses no time, but in such a visible going back, do's most effectually move forward, yea, is it not seen how he makes things fall in, that are very unexpected, cross, and remote (that would never have entered in our thoughts) to answer his blessed end, and even dispose that, which above all might seem most directly destructive to the Church, to be of all other things most effectual, and subservient to her advance, brings her more quickly foreward to the harborough, by a storme then a calme, O have we not such great things to observe in the way of the Lord, that may shew it is indeed perfect. 7. It is also very clear though not on the first view, yet in the close and issue, what a certaine steady motion providence hath and keeps on its course, whilst the World is reeling to and fro, how the Churches mercy hath by greatest disappointments been more fully answered, then in the most probable way, yea when her outgate seem'd furthest off, and had been much followed with many a weary look from some other airth, with what a strange surprisal, do's providence oft break up at her hand, as it were from under the ground with an unexpected mercy. 8. You may see his way is perfect who puts a peculiar beauty upon every occurrent of providence, and brings it forth in the very fit opportune time, that it could not fall out more seasonably and with more advantage to the Church; is there not a seen cause for her sharp trials and the necessity thereof no less discernable, then there is of the winter, for the profite and advantage of the earth; and is it not also manifest her reviving came never too late, but in the very fittest time; I know the World may object, they can see this in the revolutions of the year, but

not in any such changes of the Church, yet I am sure this is manifest that the Church of Christ hath her sad and more comforting times here, with as discernable a succession of the one to the other as there is of the Summer to the Winter, yea that under these vicissitudes of her condition she is still seen to look forth with a peculiar advantage; I shall adde; what a marvellous composition and temperament of contraries is discernable in this excellent frame of providence; there is nothing here incongruous, nothing here too small which doth not fall under its reach, and nothing so great that can overreach it, here is no jar or disagreeing with the diligent use of means, yet do's this rise so far above the same, that no humane care can bend it to their will, nor is there any running crosse to such a current: here is indeed an unsearchable deep! Yet so much is there broken up, and made clear that may convincingly witness and verifie this truth, even to ordinary observers, the way of the Lord is perfect, and what we now cannot attain in its discovery we should learn to admire and solidly believe a more clear manifestation thereof.

3. I shall yet further pursue this demonstration with respect to *that great and marvellous work of God, in the redemption of the Church*; a contrivance we may say more wonderfull then this whole structure of the universe of the heavens and earth, which are so exquisitely fram'd: For here the thing it self is not more astonishing, then the way and conduct of infinite wisdom is, in the whole frame, and all the steps thereof: O this great thing, that mens distance therewith do's only keep them from being dazled, where their ignorance is the great let why they do not more wonder at it; this is indeed far above nature, that without a divine illumination, it cannot be known, or understood, yet we must say, so much is brought forth and discovered, that these who have only report, and thence give some ordinary assent thereto, cannot have their reason and judgment in exercise without some such conviction upon their souls, that surely this is a contrivance above humane reach, and worthy of the great
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God; yea that herein his way is most absolutely perfect; and no sight can be like this where we may see so excellent a correspondence between the foundation and superstructure, that the whole tract of the Gospel is but one intire and compleat mean for glorifying God, and do's in this as the ultimat end resolve: Here men may see the greatnes of his power, that unexpressible freedome of his grace, the holy severity of justice, all meet and joyne together in a sweet agreement; where both justice is salved, and fully answered, and yet sinners saved, where mercy do's rejoyce over condemnation, vengeance is taken on our inventions, and the inventers escape: O strange! a redemption without price and absolutely free, as to sinners; yet all that a just God could exact fully satisfied and told downe; it is here we may rise and pursue this great thing up to the fountain head, which is the soveraigne pleasure of God, and is the internal impulsive cause, and thence fellow it downe to that infinite satisfaction of the Mediator, which is the great meritorious cause, and here we may see, how marvellously well ordered all the steps of this way are, all the parts of this contrivance; how the elect are made meet for the inheritance through sanctification of the Spirit, how faith hath its special concurrence and instrumentality, without prejudice to the absolute freedome of grace, since it is freely given to believe; how these excellent midses are by a most strait connection linked with the eternal counsel of God, and in a most beautiful order joined one with another. Here do's sanctification flow from an eternal decree, and like an excellent stream doth run down through time, until it lose it selfe, to say so, in that great deep of everlasting blessednes, yea thus the purpose of the Lord runs under the ground, concerning his people, until it break up at last in their heart, by their answering the call of the Gospel; O how stately a piece of work this is, and is not his way perfect therein, where you may see that grand plot of the Devil to undoe man, break upon himself, and by the seed of the woman his head crushed; where so glorious a fabrick is raised out of so great a ruine,

and poor man established by his fall, where the glory of the soveraigne God, the freedome of grace, and mans blessedness do's at once meet together, where the cure is broad and large as the wound, and the restauration made to answer to every piece of that ruine, I mean not only in mans being ransomed from eternal wrath, but that the enmity should be killed and taken away, and such a marvellous change of his nature by the renewing of the Spirit, which even here restores him in part to that he lost; It is on this blessed contrivance we may see men brought under a constraint, by irresistible grace, yet without violence, their reason further raised and refined, yet not broken, and its true liberty not taken away, but restored; yea a notable consistency betwixt moral perswasive arguments and the efficacious power of grace, betwixt mens planning and watering in the use of means, and the alone encrease thereof from the Lord, betwixt a physical and moral concurrence in producing one and the same effect, betwixt those two desires in prayer, *Da Domine, quod jubes, et jube quod vis*; Is there not likewise here a most excellent suitability and congruity, betwixt repentance and remission of sins, without prejudice to the freedome of grace, since he gives repentance as well as requires it, and makes his people what he would have them to be; O how marvellous a contrivance is there where the blessed Majesty of God finds an argument in himself when man had none wherewith to plead, was found in the forme of a servant, and became our neereft Kinsman, to redeem the inheritance; where his peoples standing is ensured by another surety and strength, then their own, not on their apprehending, but their being apprehended; where the Lord do's oblige himselfe by bond to make that good, which is only of grace, and is most freely given; where he both fram's the desire within the soul, and satisfies it; I shall only adde, it is here the redeem'd have nothing in themselves to boast, and the reprobate none but themselves to challenge, for on whomsoever that door is shut, they have therein actively concurred, to draw a bar for shutting themselves out.

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4. I shall offer one instance more wherein this great truth may be demonstrat to the world that the way of the Lord is perfect, that his works are done in judgment, yea do's all things well with respect to that, *marvelous order of nature and disposal of the works of God under the sun*, how unexpressibly well all are fitted for some use, and directed to their proper end: this is indeed a truth, wherein the greatest Atheists may see this piece of the Scripture convincingly verified, wherein God comes so neer that men may feel after him Aa. 17. ver. 27. that it may be said, there is no way to shift this discoverie, but to stop their eares, and shut their eyes: O what a wonderful disposal may be seen, even in the commonest things, with a mutual subserviency to each other; and in this great variety and throng of the creatures, is it not obvious how each hath its voice and speech, to give us something of instruction, and everie thing hath some matter of wonder in it, that we may say, it is hard to be an Atheist, there must, be a strange violenting of their light, where the invisible God com's so neer, to make himself known by things visible, and by so marvellous a conduct and ordering thereof, shew's unto the sons of men he do's all things well: Oh, may it not be said, we cease to wonder, because every day we live and converse amongst wonders: now it is here the world hath a demonstration of the Scripture, that they dare not debate, lest they should deny sense aswel as reason, and if any will question, the glorious former of all things why things are thus ordered and disposed, let him but retire within himself and he'll finde the want and defect is truly within, which he would challenge in the way of the Lord; may we not see with astonishment, this frame and composure of the universe, how each thing doth answer its part, and to the conservation of the whole, how amidst a great contrariety an excellent concord is manifest, in all its different parts, natures and dispositions: I must truly say not only dutie but delight and pleasure may call men to this study; yea, even to lose themselves, as it were, in so sweet a labyrinth, where it is more easie to enter than to finde an

ourgate, and all things do witness even to mens senses the truth of the Scripture; it is sad we have so choise and true a historie everie day to read on of the works of God which are not in themselves greater then that wisdom is by which they are ordered, and it should be for the most part as a sealed book: but it is not here in a general this truth can be reached, O will you come and see, consider the work of the Lord and you must also see it is perfect and his wayes are judgment, yea, that he hath done all things well, do but consider this stupendious frame of the universe, a fabrick that in all its parts is most exactly joyned, and nothing in it defective or out of order; here you may see that great Minister of nature the sun, with what advantage it is placed and fitted to dispense its light and refreshing influences to the earth, is it not with such wisdom that to move in a higher or lower orb would not thus answer the advantage of things below, with what a constant motion do's it travel betwixt the tropicks to fulfil its annual course, and in diverse parts do's successivly arise, that by turns it may give the severall parts of the earth a visite; should we cease to wonder at the rising and setting thereof, because it is so frequently seen; O may not this arreast our thoughts with astonishment with what wisdom it is made subservient all alongst its course to cause Summer and Winter, Spring and Harveft; yea how its approaches and withdrawings are gradual, that by its ascent in the spring it may dispose out bodies for the summer, & by its descent in such a degree in the harveft may prepare and fit us for the Winter, that there should not be an immediate bordering betwixt these extremes; is not its correspondence also manifest, that it hath with things here below, which do's not only reach the surface of the earth, but the most inward bowels and secret caverns thereof, for its power is known on minerals aswel as plants: Is it not also evident that this glorious body of the moon though of a lesser glory then the other is for an other use then for men to gaze thereon, how it keeps them from groaping in utter darkness through the night, and lights a candle to the world when

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when the sun is gone down, which by its withdrawing do's so far discover the glory of the moon and stars, that its brightnes did vail and darken; its influence is known also upon the sea, upon seeds and plants, yea upon the humours and complexion of men bodies: O what innumerable employments are these by which it is made continually subservient to the world! And do you not see, how the night hath its special use & is well ordered aswel as the day, yea that it hath its peculiar beautie, and by its darknes doth commend the light and makes its approach more sweet and desirable; this gives the labouring world some time for repose, and most observably answers mans weariness and necessity of such a rest with so fit a season, that we may say it but draws a curtain about us for that end, and do thus retire the earth, and puts it in a sweet and silent composure from the noyse and hurryings of the day; yea do's not every evening solemnly warne men of their approaching death, and swift passing away of time, that they may have no excuse of being surpris'd in this great change, who have so grave so frequent a monitor, to speak it to them; but let us a little futher follow this choise enquiry and search of nature which is so clear a witness to the Scripture, and you may see how marvellous these various motions of the heavens are, the position of the stars and constellations, where each hath its own proper course, yet all carried about to one general and common end, to shew there must be a first mover who is not subject to motion or change, but do's manifestly determine al these: O strange! How do's this great body of the earth hing upon nothing, that a thing so vast and ponderous should lean upon the air as on a foundation, must there not be here a piece of art above humane reach, how thus it do's keep its center, and rests there upon and is it not clear how steady the axis of the earth is, and perpetually parallel with it self, that it cannot tumble this or that way: What a marvellous order is also seen in these higher motions of the celestial bodies, of which some are slow, others more rapide, some tend to the east, others towards the west, and yet from these though

thus cross to other, there results a singular harmony, in which the conservation of the World and production of things here below are concern'd, which could not so well have answered this, without such a variety in their courses; It is true the Lord might have made every day a years length, and caus'd the sun keep its course, from east to west so long, but O how well are all these things ordered, and that thus he doth divide our life in such short stages, to make us more frequently minde our change, wee see likewise how marvellously the earth is framed in its various parts and proportions, and the singular advantage it hath both in its posture, and figure; the mountains and high places do not mar its beauty, nor want their use, where the beasts have a shelter provided; and is not nature likewise more displayed and laid open to men by the plains, and vales, which are to the earth a special ornament? How manifold is the use of the air which fills up that vast space betwixt the higher and lower world; it is here the birds finde use for their wings, thorough this the rains finde an easy passage, this do's interveen betwixt the sun, and the earth, yet is no let to the communication, either of light or heat, but its scorching is thus qualified, by that sweet coole breathing of the air; is not the singular use and advantage of the winds also known? And how these are both directed and bounded, so that men can neither cause a storme nor a calme, at their pleasure; and O can you look on the sea, and not wonder, what marvellous things are there, how it is shut up with gates and bars, and hath its appointed bounds, without which there could be no reason, how a bank of sand should restrain the great Ocean from breaking forth, its manifold use and advantage is also known; would any wish that the whole earth were dry land? and O strange that this not only is made passable, but by that art of navigation becomes a more easy way for transport and commerce, by which cities and countreys are made to flourish, do you not see that regular course it keeps in its ebbings and flowings, the singular use and subservience of the tides, so that when men are difficulted in an inquiry

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inquiry about the natural cause of these, they cannot but observe the special end, and advantage thereof, may we not with wonder also see, how these parts of the world, which have the most scorching day, and greatest heat, have usually the longest night to qualify it with such a cooling moisture, How these countreys which have no rain as Egypt have some supply thereof by an overflowing of the rivers, do you see any members either of men, or beasts superfluous, and want an use, or is there any poisons but hath some peculiar antidote provided, yea the most hurtful creatures as Serpents and Vipers are found of singular use in medicine against their own hurt, as the oyle of Scorpions is against the sting thereof; you see the poor people have medicinal waters provided without mony, and it is a notable remark which is certainly known of one who inclosed some such well in his ground that he might put an impost thereon had it taken away and run dry on his hand; what a marvellous use is there of natural antipathies and sympathies whereon the operation of medicine, the special improvement of navigation, by making use of the load-stone doth so much depend, you see how the harvest gives a large compensation for the toile of the spring, and do not the poore mans labours through the day make his bed soft in the evening, and his rest sweet unto him? You see that correspondence the heavens keep with the earth in these sweet refreshing showers, by which its seminal vertue is drawn forth, and thus the rain doth moisten what the heat would scorch, yoy may see how it is destill'd and drop't down, not in violent spaites, but as it were through a small sieve, or otherwise it would hurt more then help; you would not desire to want rain, nor yet to have it perpetual, and thus it is ordered; are not the vapours exhaled from the earth, that by refreshing shows they may return thither again? O how manifold are the works of the Lord! And in what wisdom hath he done them all; Is not the pain and travel of the beasts in bringing forth their young, proportioned to their condition, and to that lodging they have,

Job 39:3. They bow themselves, and bring forth their young, and cast forth their sorrows, and as their time and duration is for most part shorter than mans, is not their growth also suted thereto; you see men have their lodging furnished ere they come in the World, the breasts are provided, and by a wonderful instinct, they are taught to seek after the same; it is known how the want of hearing or sight useth some other way to be recompensed, with some special natural sagacity; Yea, a want and defect in some parts of the body is oft supplied with a greater agility in some other members thereof, which is known in many remarkable instances, such as that woman in this countrey, not long since who had no armes from her birth, but could with no less dexterity make use of her right foot for all the uses of her hand; You see how the beasts have some natural defence and are taught self preservation, and what the hare and hinde wants of the lions paw and strength is made up oft by a more swift foot; what an advantageous antipathy there is amongst the beasts, lest the earth should be overrun with these which are hurtful; the dog fitted by a strange tendency of its kinde, to pursue the wolf and the fox, and the cat for destroying of rats; You see how the oxen are tamed to endure the yoke; and brought under discipline, whose strength is above many of the wilde beasts; are not these things that are most absolutely necessary most easie likewise to be had and whilst there is such a varietie of labour and toile do's attend the lot of man here, doth not the earth also afford a varietie of delights? you see the birds needs no instructor to build their nests, and choise a fit place, nor do they mistake their seasons, yea do not these sweet Musicians by their natural melodie call men to praise, whose debt is much above theirs? Is there not a marvellous coalition betwixt the graft and the tree, which exceeds humane art if nature did not so wonderfully cooperat therein, and in the inoculating a small bud into a stock; and O that wonderful encrease that follows the seed thrown into the ground how it dies and rots there that it may rise with the greater

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ter luster and advantage, and by such a significant embleme reach men the certainty of the raising of their bodies, for its sure the ordinarie things of nature are great and convincing Hieroglyphicks to hold forth more divine things if we could but read them: do you not see what veins of coals and other minerals go through the earth? whence it is furnisht and hath fit materials for dayly use, and for an improvement of mens faculties: is not the earth watered by an intercourse which springs and rivers hath with the sea? and what some parts of the world want, is it not in other things supplied; that everie countrey hath al most some peculiar advantages; it is known how the coldest places of the earth, do most abound with the warmest furies; you see the beasts want not their table; and is not the lillie well clothed? Doth the gras of the ground want its use? Yea is not the very collour thereof notably suited for mens eyes? What cause of wonder is there of the different forms, the vertues and varietie of plants? You see the little ants have their magazine and storehouse, the bees want not some order and government; yea no humane skill can frame such work as theirs is: But O Man what a curious and exquisite fabrick is that which did come in a mongst the last of the creation? but as the greatest wonder thereof, a most rare piece of work of a strange various and subtile composition, in which there is so notable an harmonie made up of many contraires; I think these who would learne Atheisme are not only concernd to stifle their reason but to shut their eyes from looking on themselves and the frame of their bodies, which is so curiously wrought with nerves sinews and veins, with such a varietie of parts, and yet not one bone or Muscle superfluous. (¶)

THE FOURTH ARGUMENT.

I Shall here offer to prove the Scriptures accomplishment is this, *That whereof the most part, as to these special predictions, and promises that concern the Church, is fulfilled,*

led, and hath now taken place in their appointed times, which we may at this day clearly read in the event, and but a little part thereof now remaineth to be made out, must be a sure truth. But the Scripture is thus fulfilled, and the prophecies thereof now made legible in the history of providence, and in the works of God about his Church. Therefore, &c.

I would premit here some few things ere I speak particularly to this argument.

1. Though the Scripture is thus wonderfully suited by the Lord, and taketh place in every generation as if it were alone directed to that time, yet, it is also clear that a special part thereof hath its proper accomplishment in these ages, and periods of time, to which it doth in a peculiar way relate, some part of it, which did concern the times of the Old Testament, some that doth also answer to the times of the Gospel, and a part of it which hath a peculiar respect to these latter dayes, which the Lord is now bringing forth, and we wait for a more full accomplishment, that it is on a near approach.

2. It is also sure that the whole work of God, and his providence about his Church here in the World which was perfect from the beginning, and before him from eternity, is comprehended under the written word, where the Lord hath fully revealed his minde, and counsel anent every event, and concernment of the Church; though we oft be in the dark in finding out the same, but the event will in due time speak for itself, which should cause us until then, with much sobriety passe our judgment on some of these truths that are not yet fulfilled.

3. It is clear that the Prophets of old did not onely foretel such great changes, and revolutions, as were to go over the Churches head, and declare the certainty thereof, but we find these prophecies oft point at the times, and periods of time, whereto they did relate, and though sometimes in dark tearmes, yet did clearly shew that there was a certain prefixed time, and not at every time they could have their performance.

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the Scripture, and the perfecting the Lords work about his Church will be at once, and doth keep foot together, and then shall a full, and satisfying discovery of Gods way, and providence, and all that he hath been doing in the World clearly break up, when the great mystery of God in his writen word is finished, and the Church so near to land.

That I may speak a little to so grave a subject: I would lay down these two things to be considered. 1. How much of the Scripture, and predictions thereof may be now seen clearly verified in the event. 2. What doth yet remain to have an accomplishment in these last times, by which we may certainly judge how near the Lords work about his Church is to a close; anent the first I shall point at some of these most concerning events, and changes which the Church hath met with, wherein we may see what of the Scripture may at this day be read in the history of providence, and is certainly fulfilled.

I. WHAT IS ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED.

I. Let us go back to these first times after the fall; and see *that dreadful stroke which came upon the old World by the flood after an universal defection from God*, and we shall there find the fulfilling of that which Noah that great Preacher of righteousness had oft foretold; and of these threatnings which by Moses were there recorded, wherein it may be very manifest. 1. That this truth besides Divine authority, no records of (ancient times no antiquity could ever contradict, yea, some of the eldest writers doe clearly witness something of an universal deluge over the earth with the strange preservation of some from it, however they were in the dark as to many circumstances thereanent. Josephus doth cite Berosus the Caldean about this, who without doubt had then some of these oldest records true, and uncorrupt. Eusebius also doth mention some fragments of Abidenus, and Appolidorus, which in his time were extant, clearly pointing at the flood, and at Noah under the name

name of Zifuthrus with his sending out of birds to see if the waters were asswaged. 2. There is nothing here doth contradict reason, how this might be brought about, even in the way of ordinary natural causes, which the Lord did make use of for that end; for we find the windomes of Heaven were opened the air being condensed into clouds, and their retentive power loosed, these great floodgates were thus set loose; which falling not in drops, but all in a full body like the spouts and cataracts of the West-Indies might soon overwhelm the earth with abundance of water, while these fountaines also of the great deep beneath were broken up, which was not only the Ocean let forth to go over its banks, but an universal vent to all the veines of the earth, and that great masse of waters which is in the bowels thereof, which from beneath meeting these that were from above, may give men a clear, and rational account how such a thing might be. 3. This piece of the Scripture is most congruous, and agreeable to the whole, and the great scope and drift of the same, for it points out an universal defection, and an universal stroke meeting together, it leads us forward to Christ, of whom the ark was an excellent shadow, and of that salvation which in and by him the Church hath from eternal wrath, and is a very manifest pledge, and sign of that last destruction of the World, which though not in that manner, yet, shall once surely be, and find men in such a condition, as this flood found them into in the dayes of Noah.

(¶) II. What we find expressly threatned by the Lord, *Gen. 11. ver. 7.* as a stroke and judgment upon men for their ambition and pride, *The confounding of their languages*, is it not also most clearly verified and write forth to the view of the world in the event? that whilst men cannot deny or debate a thing which is so conspicuous and undeniable, they must also see a fulfilling of the Scripture, and that there was a divine hand in this strange stroke which may be a convincing refutation of Atheisme, if such do not willingly shut their eyes at these clear evidences.

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1. That it is sure, there is such a confusion and variety of languages in the earth at this day, whence it is divided, one part thereof so much rent from another, commerce and correspondence thus made difficult, and a bar drawn betwixt nations, by a different speech, and do not the most ancient records of the world witness the same to have been in former ages. 2. It is also sure that no tradition or humane history, but the Scripture only gives us an account of this strange thing; how it should be, or whence its true rise is; yea these who have write most of other things, yet can give no reason why they write in one language more then in another, but that it is proper to their country where they had their education, but how the race of men who have such a community in other things should be thus divided is indeed a mystery which divine truth can only unvail and shew its meaning. 3. It is sure there is no language by an other that is natural to men, but what *ex insueto* is acquired whether by long continued use as children doth their mother tongue, or by set rules, it is true Adam who was the first man had his by some extraordinary infusion, but it is found a pitiful fancy alleaded by some that young children who have never heard speech and have been thus kept at a distance would speak the first language of the world and consequently Hebrew, for the contrair of this is certainly proven. 4. Is not this confusion and diversity of languages which is in the world a most strange and marvellous thing, which in no ordinary way, yea without something of a miracle, could be brought about, and to no continuance of time, or invention of men can be attribute, if we consider these things. 1. It is clear that if man can be traced back to some original and beginning, there must then have been some one language, whilst the world was but in a family, so that if you will admit the truth of the creation, you may see it was not so at the beginning. 2. Is it not undenyable that men could not choyse so great a plague, and judgment on themselves if they had any use of reason, which would divide betwixt them, and the great part of mankind, hinder trade and

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mutual interchange with other countreys, either in exporting, or importing most necessar commodities; that which also would obstruct humane knowledge, and the discovery of these excellent inventions, and experiments of other places, yea give man whose dayes are so few such a sore toyle and labour to acquire but a few of these many different languages which are in the world. 3. Is it not also clear that this is above humane reach which men cannot judge, how in an ordinary way such different languages could have been found out and afterwards acquired by the body of nations, yea how there should be such an agreement in this amongst a vast multitude of different tempers and capacities, for it is obvious there should have then been an inventing of these first radical languages? I mean these that are not dependent upon, or interwoven one with another, but are wholly different as Greek, Latine, &c: and therewith such a vast Dictionary of words with their significancie and rules to conjoyne them in sentences, must have necessarily been framed, and abandoning also and turning off of some former language, so far as to the bringing of it in oblivion; yea should the universal consent and concurrence of the multitude in such places be required? I confesse this were not so strange if such a difference betwixt languages were but in some peculiar mode or propriety of phrases, and alteration of words according to the various tempers and climats of the earth; but we may see what different languages there are wholly independent on other, not only in original words, but in the very whole frame and bulk, which can be no compound of other languages, as many of our modern tongues are, which do's truly state the case in such a manner, that the Scripture only can resolve how this should be, yea it is known besides many branches, commixtures and variations of languages which through continuance of time, through conquest and mingling of nations together are in the World, there is besides a vast number of these that may be on clearest ground judged original and mother tongues, of which (whatever lesser variation there hath been by the adding of some new words, or

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the quitting of old, yet the whole bulk do's remain intire.
 4. What a strange and marvellous thing must this be, if we consider that most of ancient maternal languages were previous to the use of letters, whence rules or a methode could be convoyed from one to another, if it had been only some humane invention; for we may know from surest antiquity how long it was ere several nations reached a further way to communicat knowledge and represent their conceptions then by speech and a vocal tradition, or some significant symboles or Hieroglyphicks which were then much in use to supply the want of letters, is it not known how little either by pen or printing hath been discovered to the World, but of such late time, as is from clearest histories written to us; thence we find very little of the Greek language upon record before Homers time; Now may not this clearly demonstrat that in an ordinary way these languages could not then have been acquired
 5. It may be very convincing what the Scripture anent this holds forth that, by these different languages, nations and families were at first divided, *Genes. 11.* yea, that this was the first rise of bounding one of them from another, for which the World could never give another cause; thus did the Lord inclose his Church in Israel, and by this diversitie of languages did outlaw the rest of the earth, for there, was that venerable first language of the Hebrew kept up, by which these sacred oracles of the Old Testament were made knowne. I shall further adde, is not a divine hand eminently seen in this? that so great a bar, which for so long a time was betwixt the Church and the world; should not only at last be taken off, but such a curse turn'd into a blessing, that the power of God and his verie immediate work in spreading the light amongst so many people of a strange language might now under the gospel be more conspicuous, that once such an interdiction had been served on the world thereby, to shut the nations out from the Church; for we may say there hath been as signal a miracle in the gift of tongues under the New Testament as there was formerly in the confusion thereof. (¶)

III. What we have expressly promised in the word of the *Churches delivery from Egypt*, and was foretold by Joseph at his death, that God should surely bring back his People out of that land, for which he left his bones to ly unburied as a pledge thereof, hath now many ages past been fulfilled. It is long since that remarkable day when God made a way for his People through the red sea, and his power known upon Pharaoh, and the Egyptians, since Moses with the Church did sing that triumphant song, *The horse, and his rider he hath cast in the sea*, wherein these things are most clear.

1. That this was a deed known, and publick in the time, which was not done in a corner, but in the view of the World, and before all the Children of Israel, and by them attested, and with greatest carefulnes transmitted to their children, and by these to the following generations, as a thing never to be forgotten.

2. Was testified by Moses so great a person, and eye witnes thereof, one whom even the most auncient of heathen writers do mention with much respect, and in this did never challenge his testimony, though a matter of fact, and of that moment, which all the nations about could not but know, and both in the present and after ages have the remembrance thereof kept up; so that they might easily refute such a thing if false, and we may judge the Egyptians, and many others, could want no goodwill to put disgrace on a People they so much hated nor be ignorant of that which Moses published in his own time, to whose works some of the auncientest heathen writers, doe shew they have been no strangers.

3. A truth which by Moses was put in record, and delivered to the Jewes to be kept by them, and their children in all succeeding ages, a record which they did so narrowly look to, and had in that reverence, and esteem, that all the syllabs, and letters thereof were by them numbred, lest in the smallest point it should be wronged, yea, were more careful to preserve it then any nation can be of their most concerning rights, and charters.

4. A thing whereof the remembrance was yearly from that time celebrat by the Jewish Church, whence the institution of the passover had its rise, that deliverance being as a sign, and sacramental pledge of that great salvation by him who is our true passover.

III. What is held forth in the Scripture concerning *the more full growth of the Jewish Church* that Jacob should enjoy a Scepter, which was foretold by dying Jacob, and promised once and again to Abraham by the Lord that his seed should be as the sand of the sea, and enjoy Canaan for an inheritance, hath it not long since been fulfilled? Wherein these things are clear.

1. That for many ages Israel did enjoy that land in a most flourishing condition which doth in part appear from these very ruines and desolation, over which they have so long lamented, the glory of Jerusalem, and the Temple once so famous, which causeth such reverence amongst them to the very rubbish thereof at this day.

2. That they were once a people by themselves who were not mingled with the Nations, but kept at a distance by their Religion, and Lawes, from the rest of the World as a peculiar People to the Lord is a thing undenyable.

3. That whilst they enjoyed it there was a singular blessing of fruitfulness thereon above other places, so as that small piece of ground was enough for an innumerable multitude of inhabitants, but is now at this day a barren sand, an extraordinary curse no lesse seen thereon then the blessing was in former times.

4. It is also evident that something in the way, and carriage of this people, even in their low wandering condition doth discover they have not forgot what once they were, nor their former grandour, and flourishing, but still keep by themselves with some respect to their own land which their fathers did enjoy.

V. That piece of the Scripture which did concern the *declining times of the Church under the Old Testament*, what

Jeremy foretold of the Babylonish captivity hath now many ages since been fulfilled, a truth which we have attested by sacred history, an history which doth clear justify it self, and its authority by such convincing marks thereof, that we may say, these who do seriously converse with the word, cannot take up Atheisme without the laying down of reason, and putting a force upon their own light.

Now as to this particular prophecy we would but seriously consider.

1. That which Jeremy did foretell anent the captivity, was not its accomplishment put on record in a book of the Churches lamentations? Where this truth may be read in her teares, and truly such as ever knew grief in a high measure, may easily know what is there exprest to be sad earnest, and read the lively motions of an afflicted case therein, and besides hath not this been witnessed to after ages by a visible monument, even the destruction of the Temple, that great and excellent work, which though after rebuilt did never attain its former splendour.

2. This was a matter of fact of great note, and famous in the time, done in the view of all the nations, a considerable piece of the Babylonish conquest, yea that testimony the Scripture beareth to the same, was it not a few ages after made publick to other parts of the world by the Septuagint translation, so that it had been easy for Ptolemy or any in that time to have discovered the falsehood of a thing so lately done, yet, these times nor the most professed enemies to the Church therein, could not in the least contradict the same.

3. Though much of humane history, and these records of auncient times that we now have, are both corrupt and defective, yet, there wants not some consent, from the surest of these, to many of the most observable things that we have of the history of the old testament, and as to the certainty of this truth besids its own authority, we will find some of these oldest writers Berosus, Herodot, and Xenophon, give some light to the same, whose witness the Atheist cannot challenge; yea, is it not clear that Josephus

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not onely from sacred history but from these old records, and fragments of former times which were then extant (though since have been much lost) compose his Jewish antiquities, which give so particular a relation of this truth.

VI. What was foretold by Daniel concerning the rise, and fall of the Monarchies, and change of these great Empires, which had been so sore a rod upon the Church, hath it not many ages past had a most punctual performance? It is now long since that great Image shewed to the prophet in a vision, hath been brought down, and broken, so that scarce the toes thereof doe now remain, which besides the Scripture, may be clearly demonstrat upon other rational grounds.

1. It being granted that the Prophecy of Daniel was translated in Greek, and laid up in that great library of Alexandria, long before much of it was fulfilled, before Antiochus Epiphanes, and the rising of the Roman Empire, of which Porphyrius could not be ignorant, though all he could answer to that evident agreement betwixt his Prophecie and the event, was that it must have been writ after these things were accomplished, whilst it is clear, that a part of the Prophecie of Daniel which concerned the fourth Monarchy, was not even in his times fully made out, ye we must say something thereof doth reach to the last end of time.

2. It is also undenyable that in these great revolutions of the Monarchies there is a discernable consent and harmony betwixt the Scripture, and these ancient records which we yet have of these times, so that not only the things themselves, but some of the most observable circumstances thereof which are particularly mentioned by Daniel, we may read in Xenophon, Herodot, and Diodorus Siculus.

3. It must also be granted that somethings which in Daniels Prophecie would seem most strange, and improbable, such as Belsazars death in that very night the hand writing was shewed to him, may be particularly understood in Xe-

nophons history, how Cyrus took the advantage of the Babylonian security whilst they were in the midst of a solemn Feast, and by diverting the channel of Euphrates did enter the city without opposition; also how that great horn of the high goat was so suddenly broken and the coming up of four in his room, which by Daniel are expounded of the Grecian Monarchy, and the dividing of that Empire after Alexanders death, is it not punctually held forth by all the histories of that time.

4. Was there not a very convincing appearance of a divine hand, both in the rise, and fall of these Monarchies and an extraordinary providence which we cannot but see when we read these histories, that surely something above ordinary means, and second causes was both in Cyrus conquest against the Babylonians, and the marvelous swift progresse, and successe of Alexander against the Persians.

VII. That which was the great scope of all Prophecies under the Old Testament. *The coming of the Messias* is surely verified, and now many ages past hath an accomplishment, the Lord is come unto his Temple even he whose day Abraham, and the Saints under the law did long after, this was the most happy, and notable crisis that ever the Church was under, the great Epocha, and period of time from which she doth now reckon, which we know is no fable, or cunning device of man, that God was manifest in the flesh, did make his abode for some time in the earth, suffered at Jerusalem in the view of the World, before many witnesses, did arise from death on the third day, was seen, and known by his Disciples thereafter, and having finished the work for which he came was received up again into glory.

This is indeed a great truth which concerneth us no less to know, and be sure of, then our soul is worth, and interest through eternity, the fulfilling whereof besides the authority of sacred writ, the witness, and records of the Evangelists, and Apostles of Jesus Christ who testify what

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they certainly knew, is a truth which from such convincing rational grounds may be demonstrated, that the greatest height of Atheisme knoweth not how to state it selfe in a direct opposition to the same; and truly in this we may say the Lord hath so tendered the strengthening of his peoples faith and their encouragement, that as it is the most concerning promise of the Scripture. on which our whole hope, and blessednes depends, so is it also most clear, and conspicuous in the event: I shal but only touch this, whereof so much hath been said by others.

1. It is undeniable the Messias was to come, to whom all the sacrifices under the Law these auncient types, and shadowes did clearly point, to whom the Prophets bear witness, and was the faith of the auncient Jewish Church, of which promise they were perswaded, even whilest they saw it but a far, yea did embrace, and repose themselves thereon, and is there not a most clear, and exact portraiture drawn forth under the Old Testament, of the Messias, what an one he should be, and by what peculiar characters he should be known, who was to be revealed to Israel.

2. The special season, and period of time wherein Christ should come, we find prefixed, and shewed to the auncient Church, which though under some figurative expressions seemed then dark, yet, was so far revealed that upon a diligent search, and enquiry, and particular collation of the times, it might be easy to discern the Messias coming, and near approach, of which salvation the Prophets did enquire, 1 Pet. i. ver. 10. and truly the fall of the Monarchies, and right uptaking of Daniels weeks, were sure, and solide grounds, for a clear computation thereaunt; thence was it that so general an expectation of the Messias was among the Jewes, at that very time when he came, so as divers impostors did arise whom the People was ready to follow, and we see with what amazement the Pharisees did inquire at John the Baptist if he were the Christ, or not; yea, Josephus sheweth how the perswasion of this did most excite that People to war with the Romans

from the prophecies they had in holy writ, that from Judaea should about that time come who was to be Emperour of the World.

3. It is also sure there was such an one, who in the dayes of Tiberius, and under the reign of Herod was made manifest to Israel; and came with no outward shew, and observation, but did great, and marvellous things before all the People; was crucified at Jerusalem, under Pontius Pilate, and notwithstanding the ignominy of his death was after adored, and followed, both by many of the Jews and the gentils, whose doctrine did also in short time spread through the World, a truth which the greatest adversaries of the Gospel have ever confessed, and do attest the history thereof de facto, to be a faithful relation, not only Jewes, but the heathen writers Suetonius, Tacitus, and Plinius the younger that lived near, and some of them contemporary with the times of the Apostles, do witnes that this Jesus whom the Christians worship, did truely suffer in the time of Pilats jurisdiction over the Jewes.

4. Is it not clear how this appearance of Christ to the World; did exactly tryft with the very time, foretold by the Prophets thereanent? Was not Jacobs prophecy thus accomplished? for until that time it is clear the royal line of Davids house did not cease, until Herod a stranger came to reign, by whom it was utterly cut off, and it is manifest these 70 weeks mentioned by Daniel, must be understood of years else they could admit no other sence, which reckoning from the decree, given out by Cyrus, to rebuild the temple, are 490 Yeares, and doth answer to the very time of Christ being in the World, and his death, which necessarily falls in the last of these weeks, a thing so manifest, that Porphyrius an avowed enemy to the Christian Religion could have no answer, but that this prophecy had been devised after the event, which I am sure the Jewes, though as direct adversaries, would be loath to admit.

5. It is most clear that in him who at that time was revealed to Israel, whom the Christian Church doth this day worship, was exactly accomplished whatever was by the

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Prophets told concerning the Messias, and it is no small advantage for the Christian cause, that it needs but appeal to these records, which have been kept, in the hands of her adversaries, where there is so clear a portraiture of him held forth, as to his person, his way of coming, the place whence, the entertainment he should get, and his death, that I must think it a contradiction to reason, how men should acknowledge the Old Testament, and not grant the New; since, it is clear the Jewes look for no other Messias, then such an one as is held out by the Prophets, and they acknowledge also the divine authority of Esay, Daniel Micah, Malachi, &c. who do, by such clear marks point him forth, and shew the Church how they should know him when he cometh; for truly it may thence appear, that it is not more certain the Messias should come, then that Jesus Christ is he: I would but seriously ask what do the Jewes this day misse in our blessed Lord Jesus, which the Old Testament alloweth them to expect in the Messias, is it that he came not with outward shew, and glory, sure according to the Scripture, such an one we ought not to acknowledge; no, should he not be of the seed of the woman, 2 Gen. who should be born of a virgin as Esay sheweth, his voice not heard in the streets, despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrowes? Such an one, as was shadowed out under the Law, who should be made a sacrifice for sin, yea, come with no outward pomp, but meek, and lowly, and riding upon an asse, was to be betrayed, and sold, and his price shewed by Zach. for 30 pieces; a crucified dying Christ that should be wounded in the house of his friends, and cut off from amongst the children of his People, O! can men possibly deny so clear an accomplishment of these in our blessed Lord?

6. Is it not undeniable that the Jewes now in their present case, cannot possibly expect the accomplishment of this promise; that the Messias cannot this day come, according to the Scripture, except they could be put in such a condition, as they were then at Christs coming; certainly

tainly it is impossible, that the Old Testament be ever fulfilled anent this, if it be not already, can he come forth out of Bethlehem whilst now no such place is known by that name? can he come into his Temple that is utterly destroyed, is there not now a subversion of the Tribes, and the family of David not known, at this day? Yea, are not the gentils brought in, whom Iſai sheweth should be gathered under the standard of the Meſſias? doth not the daily ſacrifice ceaſe? which the Jewes will confeſſe hath been for many ages, and this was to be after his coming, and I would aſk how was that ever fulfilled, that the glory of the ſecond Temple ſhould exceed the glory of the firſt? for this cannot be on the account of its ſtructure, or outward magnificence; ſure there is nothing, wherein this glory could appear, but as it points at Chriſt, and the breaking up of that glorious light, which was before its deſtruction.

7. There is an innumerable company who have embraced the Goſpel, and received the ſpirit by the miniſtry thereof ſince the times of the Apoſtles who have put this ſeal thereto in all ages that it is the power, and wiſdome of God, and truly without partial reſpect (which the conſcience of the worſt of men have been forced to juſtify) it may be ſaid, theſe were the excellent of the earth in their time, many of greateſt outward parts and abilities, whoſe moral integrity and candour was beyond queſtion even with their adverſaries, and theſe both of Jewes, and gentils of all ranks of men, of all nations, and languages, who not only by a naked profeſſion, but by their walk, and ſufferings did ſhew forth the power, and vertue of a crucified Chriſt, yea, ſhine as lights whileſt they were in the World to the conviction of onlookers, and is not this a convincing witneſs to the truth of the Goſpel which its enemies cannot poſſibly deny.

8. That excellent doctrine delivered to the Church in the New Teſtament by Chriſt, and his Apoſtles, doth it not clearly ſhew whence it is, and witneſs its own authority? For here we may ſee a manifeſt agreement betwixt this

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and the doctrine of the auncient Jewish Church, that as the five Books of Moses hold forth the sum of the Gospel, the Covenant of grace, and that mystery of Salvation by Christ, so the Prophets do carry it on with further clearnes, and the Evangelists bring forward like an excellent edifice that is founded, and advanced in the one, but perfected in the other, all breathing the same spirit with a convincing tendency to the same end, so that we may say the old Jewes, under the Law, were in effect Christians, and the followers of Christ now under the Gospel in some respect are Jewes, being one in the substantial of their religion; for it is clear, that poor Apostat people, now in the Jewish nation, hath wholly departed from their own doctrine, and will not come to the light that they may be judged according to the Old Testament; now in this I would seriously attest the adversaries of the Gospel, if paganisme, the Turks Alcoran, or Jewish Talmud hold forth any such doctrine, or rule, as that which the Christian Religion doth, such pure, and excellent precepts to restrain the inordinancy of corrupt affection backed with arguments becoming an immortal soul, a doctrine so sincere, solid, and rational so consistent with it selfe, and agreeable to the true scope, and drift thereof, which holds forth, the most exquisite rule of perfection, for men to presse after, yea, where every page, and line breatheth forth holines towards God, and righteousness and humanity towards man.

9. I shall adde, these clear convincing evidences of the truth of the Gospel, which did attend the first publishing thereof were so evident, and undeniable a seal from the Lord as may force the greatest Atheist to silence, for. 1. They were Jewes as much concerned in the Religion of their Fathers as any, who did first publish the Gospel, none more zealous according to the Law then Paul was before his conversion, none also could challenge their driving an outward interest hereby, since persecution, and bonds, yea, greatest hazard was that which they could expect. 2. It is clear they walked by no rule of human

policy, nor these ordinary wayes of insinuation, which the World doth use, to engadge men, and make a party to themselves, but did deliver the truth, truth most repugnant to the flesh, and that interest, with greatest candour, and simplicity, though likewise with a convincing authority, and confidence, yea, came with a message to the World, which had no other convoy, or perswading argument, but the evidence of its own truth, but withall, such a power accompanying the same, before which men could not stand. 3. What is published concerning Christ by the Evangelists, the great works he did, his dying at Jerusalem with all the stupendious circumstances thereof, and signs from Heaven was not a thing done in a corner, but in the publick view of men, which in these dayes was most notour, and famous, but yet there cannot be produced, one contradictory testimony to the truth of these relations, by any adversary of the Gospel, either at that time, or since; sure the World wanted no malice, and these great things were early published, by the Evangelists, and Apostles, whilest much of that generation was alive, yet, it is clear, though in a matter of that concernment, which made then so great a noise, and was at that time putting the earth all in a flame, none was found, either among Jewes or gentils, who could, or durst put forth a manifest to discover the least cheat, or falshood, in these things attested in the History of the Gospel. 4. Whatever different partyes, and sects, did break up with the first time of the Church, to oppose the truth in other things, yet, in this they had all one consent, that he who was crucified at Jerusalem, was the Messias, and Christ, which truly, did witnes the clear irresistible manifestation of this truth in these times, since if there could have been the least ground to challenge any imposture, or deceit, in this great foundation of the Christian faith, it is more then probable, these bitter contentions followed with such animosity, and heat, and irration of these whom the Apostles and Church in that time, did with much zeal, and sharpest censures pursue, would have engadged them to put all the disgrace

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disgrace upon the truth which they could, if they might have had where to fasten their teeth; I would further adde, that even the arguments and objections, which the adversaries of the Gospel could ever bring, to oppose the same, are indeed a convincing witness, and confirmation, and shew how little they could any way say, in giving their malice a vent, we find that absurd alledgeance of the Jewes that the great works Christ did in the dayes of his flesh were by stealing the name Jehovah out of the temple, which they alledge he sewed up in his thigh, which truly needeth no further refutation but the reciting thereof, and here they are even forced to witnes the truth of these relations held forth by the Evangelists as to the matter of fact, which we find also these later Atheists such as Vanninus, Cardan, &c. dare not challenge, or debate, onely they would ascribe these great works which Christ then wrought, to the influence of the starres, a challenge so absurd, that needs no other answer but to relate it.

VIII. We have that remarkable Prophecy of the *incoming of the Gentils*, a truth indeed great, and marvellous, which as it is expressly held forth in the Old Testament, yea, is there mentioned, *Is. 54. ver. 2. Is. 60. ver. 3. 9.* is a thing so clearly now written forth in the event, that I am sure, the greatest Athists can have no shift here, that in this strange work of God about his Church; the Scripture hath an undeniable accomplishment. Now to clear this let us but consider.

1. That for many ages this truth ament the incalling of the gentils was sealed up in a prophecy, a thing so great, and astonishing to the auncient Jewish Church that they could not well comprehend the same, until once the event brought it forth, for this was indeed a mystery hid from ages, how the Gentiles should be fellow-heires, of the same body, and Partakers of the promise in Christ, when the bounds, and extent of the Church did not exceed Judea that small inclosure, whilest the whole World beside did did ly buried like an outfield in dark paganism for it is well known

known that the most pleasant places of Africa, Asia, and Europa, where afterwards many famous Churches were, within these 1600 yeares was but a savage wildernes, Britain, Germanie, and France, did then worship the sun, and starres, they sacrificed to the Gods of the heathens, yea, these eastern partes, on which the sun did first rise did not then know the God of Israel, a truth which not only the Roman, and Grecian Histories, but the records of particular Nations can clearly attest.

1. It is clear that this prophecy was not held forth in general; but we find the time also prefixed (with other special circumstances) when it should have its accomplishment at the appearing of the Messias, he should be revealed to Israel, before which time a bar was drawn in the way of the Nations, and a wall of partition betwixt them, and the Church, until he stand up who should hold forth an ensign to the People, and gather the Gentils under his standard, which Esay doth clearly shew, *Es. 11. ver. 10. and 34. ver. 1. 2. and 60. ver. 1. &c.* and then must the mountaines flow down at his presence, Nations be born at once; yea, the light break forth to the East, and the West, then should the Children of the desolat be more than of the married wife, when this time, even the set time for the gentils is once come; and it may be very convincing, which is most observable, that not withstanding of a more flourishing condition of the Jewish Church in former ages, when her grandour, and prosperity was more tempting, and the neighbourhood, and commerce which the Nations about had with that People, yea, though by the captivity they were scattered, among the Persians, and Babylonians, yet was there no such stir, or change of the World, until the appointed time once came.

3. It may be easy to prove the event of this prophecy, and its manifest accomplishment, even at the time thereof for this men can not deny, that the Lord did visit the Gentils with the knowledge of his truth, which then caused such a change in the earth, as a great part of it hath been brought from heathnish idolatry to worship the God of

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Israel, and such who once were strangers, and aliens, now made to profess the same faith (as to the substance thereof) of the auncient Jewish Church; sure this truth needs not want a witnes, whilst Nations, and much of the known World hath been for so long a time, and yet to this day are a visible proof thereof, a truth of such concernment that in former ages made a great and stupendious change upon the face of the earth, so that not onely an innumerable company out of all Nations, and languages, but the generality, the very complex body of Kingdoms, and Nations can bear witnes thereto, and now the Gospel hath been preached through much of the World, yea, we may say, few parts thereof, where there hath not been some face of a Church, though the promise hath not yet had its full accomplishment, but we wait for (according to the Scripture) a more flowrishing time, and great harvest among the Nations, when Israel shall be gathered, how ever it is sure the Lord hath in a great part, fulfilled this his promise, so that the Church might then with astonishment cry out, who hath begotten all these Children; who are these that flee as a cloud, like the doves to their windowes? O blessed day, in which the light did first break up on the poor offspring of Japhet who then dwelt in the shadow, and region of death. O blest day that brought salvation with it to the gentils, wherein the Lord did visit these dark places of the earth, which were full of the habitations of cruelty, I think the sense of so great a mercy, should never let us want an earand for giving thanks, yea, put much to silence our other complaints.

4. It is not only as to the time, but these very places of the earth which Esai, and other of the Prophets did particularly point at, this promise had an exact accomplishment? For it is this day manifest the isles which we find so frequently mentioned, that these should wait for his law, and the uttermost parts of the earth, whence he should bring the Daughrer of his dispersed, may give a clear commentary upon the same, from what the Lord hath done to Britain, and Ireland with other remote parts of the earth;

yea, hath not Ethiopians been made to stretch out their hands, even in these sun-burnt places of Africk, hath not Christ also had a conquest, where many a black moore was through grace made as the snow of Salmon, and the feathers of a dove, so that it is clear how these particular places, which were so oft pointed at by the Prophets have been visited by the Gospel, and fallen to the share of the Church.

5. This change which by the incoming of the gentils to the Church was wrought upon the Earth, is a thing so great, and astonishing, that were it still in the promise, and this not yet fulfilled, it would truly stagger our faith, how such a thing should ever come to passe, and is there not here a miracle, that the World cannot possibly deny? Even this great work of God in bringing in of the gentils, which without an extraordinary power, could not be effectuat, if men will consider. First. That swift progresse which then the Gospel had, how it did run, and was glorified through the furthest parts of the earth, and like a lightning break forth from one place to another, soe that in the Apostles time, the Scripture doth shew, how most of the conspicuous Provinces of Asia, had received the Gospel, and Tertullian who lived in the second Century, in his Book *contra judeos* doth there witnes how many nations, and these most remote from other, Parthians, Medes, Armenia, Phrygia, Cappadocia, Pontus, and Pamphilia, with much of Egypt, and diverse parts of Africk, besides Rome, Spain, and other places of Europe, were in his time almost wholly Christian; for it is indeed clear that the bounds of the Church was then of a larger extent then it is now at this day. 2. It is also undeniable that in this solemn day of the Gospels spreading amongst the nations, suffering, and persecution did all that time attend the Church, yea, in such a measure that as the writers of these times do witnes neither famine pestilence, nor the sword, did destroy so many of the World, as then were of Christians in the two first centuries put to death for adhering to the truth, and it is clear, that this great work of

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God in such a swift spreading of the Church, was most discernable in these times of hottest persecution, yea then was her most effectual growth, and increase, which upon her getting some rest, and beginning to stowish with external peace, was at a visible stand. 3. How marvellous a thing was this, to be brought about, if we consider the many different languages, that did then stop correspondence between the Church and the rest of the earth, for how could the truth thus spread among the nations, yea, in such remote places of the World Churches be planted by the Apostles, and have the Scripture translated, and made legible to them without that extraordinary gift of tongues, which for that end was then given from the Lord? Sure beside sacred authority anent this, reason may convincingly winnes to the World the truth of such a miracle. 4. How strange, and wonderful a change was this, that in so short a time the Gospel should thus enlighten, and put such a lustre on the most rude, and savage places of the earth, where scarce humanity had been, and bring them from the condition of beasts to men, should thus tame, and civilize the greatest Barbarians, and cause the lion to ly down with the lamb, yea, by the preaching of that Gospel, and of a crucified Christ, which as it was to the Jewes a stumbling block, so to the Greeks foolishnes.

And in a word was not this indeed a miracle how in a matter of such high concernment as that wherein mens soul, and everlasting interest lay they should be turned off their old way, and religion, in which they and their Fathers had been so long rooted, and that a little spark which did break up in Judea should bring down the idols of the nations, and burn up their temples.

Alas that there is so little of a large heart, of that primitive zeal, and fervour this day among Christians for the enlargement of the Church, that such merchants are now rare who would venture out to trade with other parts, for this excellent ware, the merchandise whereof is better then of gold. O that in these parts where the truth is known and professed, the Lord would raise up men of such a spirit, and

such a Magistrat, who would make it their work, and lay down solid grounds how to advance the Kingdome of Christ in the dark places of the earth, and reckon their interest in a forrain plantation upon the account of the Gospel, no lesse then on the account of trade; we would pray, and yet hope for this.

IX. What we find foretold by Daniel, yea, by Christ himself anent *the destruction of Jerusalem, and ceasing of the Jewish dayly sacrifice with the rejection of that people*, Dan. 12. ver. 11. *Matth 24. v. 2.* hath many ages past come to passe, wnerin the World may see how clearly the event doth answer this Prophecy, for it is manifest.

1. That this is a truth which doth need no other witness, then the scattered remnant, and desolate ruines of that once flourishing Church, and nation of the Jewes which we see with our eyes at this day, whose present state is so great a monument of divine judgment, so clear a witness to the Scripture that I think men cannot look thereon, if they be in any measure serious, but must have such a conviction.

2. What hath befallen this people may it not be an astonishment to the World in all succeeding ages? A stroke that hath put them in a more sad condition, then any nation, or people we ever yet heard of, that cast them out of their own land, scattered them as vagabonds through the earth, so that these many ages they have had no scepter nor law-giver, no piece of the earth they can call their own, but at the mercy, and arbitrary disposal of every place they reside in, no priviledge, or liberties but a naked permission to brook their lives and estates during the pleasure of these under whom they get shelter, a people put by themselves with a visible mark of divine wrath upon them, like a beacon set up for all the nations to look on, even these who were once eminently owned of the Lord, who was known in their palaces for a refuge, yea, it is very manifest that no stir or essay that ever they made for their releef, but was still to their further ruin, and found Gods hand visibly crosse to them therein; sure Ammianus Marcellinus, a heathen writer did intend no testimony to the Christian cause in relat-

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3. Must it not be some strange, and dreadful provocation, beyond the sin of their forefathers, whereat so strang, and unusual a stroke doth point? Whilest it is clear that notwithstanding frequent Idolatry, and departing from God when they were at that height in wickednes to offer up their children to Molech, and set up altars in the groves, to reject the message of the Prophets, and thrust some of them in a dungeon, yet, were only punished with 70 years captivity, and after by Gods very immediat hand brought again, these who had taken them captive concurring with them to rebuild the Temple: But now how long and dark hath their night been since this judgment came on them, and though they could not these many ages charge themselves with Idolatry, yet no saviour or deliverer hath been raised up, no Prophet sent forth, no sign or appearance at this day of releef, now for these 1600 years, yea amidst these frequent changes and resolutions that have been in the World no change in their condition, sure if that people were in speaking tearmes with their consciences, this might put them to a strange demurr, what should be the cause if they be not guilty of killing the Messias, and that blood pursuing them; what atrocious provocation beyond others they can condescend on, for which the Lord doth so long and so sore by such an unusual, and unheard of stroke thus contend.

4. What a marvellous concurrence of providence, and convincing appearance of a divine hand was in this judgment, the besieging of Jerusalem by the Romans trusted with the very time of the passover whilest so great a confluence of people from all parts of the land were there on that account, that both sword, and famine might contribute their help to destroy; what unreasonable and astonishing obstinacy against all offers of peace, and the most pressing

injunctions thereof which Titus Vespasian made, even whilest their ruin was otherwise inevitable, an unheard of strife where the enemy did contend to save; but they to undoe themselves, how judicially hardened, under most remarkable prodigies, and warnings which they had of their approaching desolation, divided wholly amongst themselves, yea, so cruel one upon another within, that their adversary without could not but look thereon with compassion. O what a stroke was this wherein greatest Atheists would grant a fatality, for indeed men cannot consider the same without acknowledging a divine hand and something above ordinary meanes, and causes, where all did thus meet together in a solemn tryst to accomplish that peoples ruin.

5. But it is here we may see a singular providence of God for his Church, that these who of all the World are most violent enemies to the Christian truth, are also a most convincing witness to the same, whilest, first, these do clearly attest the Scripture (which is our alone charter) the divine authority of Moses, and the Prophets; the true copies whereof, they did most tenderly preserve what ever absurd glosses some of their Rabbies have thereon; yet durst never offer in the least to vitiate the original, but have had the same transmitted, still from one age to another, to which records that are this day in their hand, the Christian Church can with much confidence appeal, and demonstrat from the Old Testament the undoubted truth of the New. Yea, in this we may appeal the Atheist to his conscience that the Scripture is no imposture, or any cunning device of Christians which is so far witnessed even by the greatest adversary, and maligners of the Christian Religion. 2. That strange induration of the Jewes, their unreasonable rejecting of the truth, who after so long a time cannot see the cause which is most discernable in their stroke. O is not this also a most convincing seal to the Scripture, and clear fulfilling thereof there is a veil over their mind as the Apostle sheweth, whilest they read the Law, judicially smitten by the Lord with blindness, that they cannot

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made, even cannot see until once this vail be taken off, and truly we may say there is nothing in their judgment more strange and astonishing then such a continued obstinacy against the truth, how they should be thus dark in the noon day, but that herein the Scripture is fulfilled; so that we may even turn a poison unto an antidor.

X. That which is so expressly foretold in the New Testament, yea, is the great drift of the Prophecies thereof, *The coming of Antichrist, and revealing of the man of sin to the World,* 2 Theſſ 2: ver. 3. 4. 7. 8. 9. hath long since been accomplished, wherein we may say the wonderful corresponding of the event with the prophecy is so clear, that this truth is now as plain, and obvious as once it was dark to the Church, these things being undeniable.

1. How the Spirit of God in the Scripture hath been in a more then ordinary way particular, to point Antichrist forth by such notour marks, and characters, that after ages may know him, if they will not shut their eyes, I confesse it is not strange the popish party should seal up the Scripture, and forbid the ordinary reading of it, since the breaking forth of that light would soon make their Kingdom dark, for if men would but set the history of the Church since the times of the Apostles, over against the Scripture, and make use of that notable key for opening up the prophecies of the New Testament, it should be then easy to know, the Antichrist is surely come, and who this is, and herein doth the Lords tender respect to his Church appear, that he doth not only in a very solemn manner forewarn men, aient this great trial, and as it were by the sound of a trumpet give an alarum, that such an adversary was coming, yea of the time thereof, who would do more hurt, then all who had gone before, but doth also make so clear a discovery of the whole fabrick, rise, and progres of that party, with such particular circumstances and differing characters from any other enemy of the Church, as may render the World most inexcusable, if they will needs dash on that rock, whereon the Scripture hath set so conspicuous a beacon.

2. That this Prophecy should now want an accomplishment or Antichrist be yet to come is a thing most repugnant to sacred truth, since it is sure, that mystery of iniquity even in the times of the Apostles did begin to work, and who then for a time withheld his coming, the heathen Empire of Rome, hath long since been taken out of the way, which caused some Christians in these dayes with the standing, and continuance of that Empire, from the terrour they had of that adversary who according to the word they knew was to fill his room, yea, do we not find the Churches trial from Antichrist should be the most sore, and lasting trial of the Church under the New Testament, which after her begun breathing from heathnish persecution, was to continue for many ages wherein the word is most expresse, and clear, that the rise, and fall of this enemy should be gradual, and not at once whose beginning, and first appearance might be traced to the first times of the Church, and his close, and finall ruin near the second coming of Christ, by the brightnes whereof he shall be destroyed, and therefore, this is so much the subject of the Prophecies of the New Testament, the great intent, and scope of the Revelation of John, in which, the true state of the Christian Church, with the various changes of her condition, even from the opening up of the first seal to the blowing of the last trumpet, is particularly held forth, and there may we all along trace the steps of the rise, and fall of that man of sin.

3. That such an one as the Scripture points forth, doth most fully answer to all these marks which are there given of Antichrist, hath come and been revealed to the World, is a thing so very manifest that except men will needs force their light, and conscience, it cannot but be beyond question, and debate, even such an one whose coming should be after the working of Satan with all power, signes, and lying wonders, forbidding to marry, and to abstain from meats which God had appointed, who sitteth in the temple of God, having a name full of blasphemy, and doth exalt himself above all that is called God, who bewitcheth the

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Kings, and great men of the earth with his enchantments; yea, even by his livery may he be known that he most usually hath scarlet, and purple, which I think truly marvellous how particularly these are mentioned in the Scripture; and in a word, such an one whose traffick, and merchandize, is not only gold, and silver but the souls of men who should be drunk with the blood of the Saints, and Martyres of Jesus Christ, under whose reign the Church must flee to the wilderness, and there be latent for a long time, and his seat, that City is situated upon seven hills, even that great city which doth rule over the Kings of the earth. O strange how men can acknowledge this for the Scripture of God, and yet not see it fulfilled before their eyes, that there is so vive an image, and portraiture of Antichrist there held forth, such peculiar characters which do convincingly point at the Pope, and popish hierarchy, yea could answer to no other adversary which Christ ever had under the New Testament either Pagan, or Mahometan, and yet so much of the World doth not know him when he is before their eyes.

4. It is clear that no age since Antichrist was revealed, did altogether want some witness, to point him forth, even in the darkest times, many of whom loved not their lives unto the death, that they might seal this truth, and it may be a question if more of the blood of the Saints was shed under heathens then in after times under Antichrist, yea though we had not such expresse marks to discover him from the word, it may be easy for men to judge, who that is, who is this day so directly opposite to Jesus Christ, and the great design of the Gospel, that assumes to himself what is alone due to God, to forgive sin, and be worshipped with Religious adoration, doth challenge a Magisterial power, and supremacy, over the whole Church as its head, a stile too great for any of the Angels, who maketh void the merit of Christ, and layeth down a way of life, and salvation, on the same terms that it stood in the Covenant of works, doth destroy the great intent of the Gospel, and in effect denyeth Jesus Christ to have come in the flesh,

who setteth Heaven upon sale for money, and permitteth none to perish and goe to hell, but the poore, doth dispense with grossest acts of sin and the expresse commands of the Law-giver, maketh morall prohibitions void by his authority, yea, halloweth the very stewes, and most horrid acts of uncleanes, taketh on him to change the condition of the dead, and ensure to their friends the happy state of their souls, if they will make large offerings on that account, O! who is this, is not that Antichrist, whose way doth state him in such direct tearmes of opposition to Christ?

5. Have we not cause to wonder no lesse at the strange induration and blindness of the popish party, then of the Jewes, that whilst the one doth confesse the Old Testament, and yet knoweth not Christ, the other should grant the truth of the New Testament, and not know Antichrist, that he is come, even he after whom a great piece of the World, for these many ages hath been wondering? sure so clear an agreement betwixt this prophecy and the event may not only put this beyond debate, but leave a conviction, upon the greatest Atheists, of the truth, and divinity of the Scripture? for what ever former times might pretend ignorance whilst this mystery was but working, now when the man of sin hath come to his full height, and stature, and so clearly revealed by the light of the Gospel, it taketh away all excuse, and I professe in these latter times, I cannot see how one can be a knowing Papist, and not an Atheist also.

(¶) I know it is a sore judgment on men, who will not receive the truth, that the discoverie thereof should be their pain and torment, and I am sure whatever advantages or outward peace, followers of antichrist have this day, they can have no sound sleep, whilst the light with that cleanness doth shine, that they can neither stand before it, nor yet flee and escape, where their conscience will not follow; but O here is the scripture evidently fulfilled, and their judgment so farre begun, as it is held forth. Rev. 16. that

that the greater discoverie the light makes, the more they should rage; and in fury rise against it; for the heat of this cannot but scorch where it doth not warm; there is no help where God doth judicially harden men, no blindness like that where they shut their eyes, and the righteous God makes it their plague by putting his seal to it: however wisdom must be justified of her children, the truth cannot loose its ear and even when its effects are sad and judicial, for it is a sweet savour to God in them who perish: It is truly a sad sight, and there seems no access to convince, where malice at the way of the Lord turns men mad, yea cruel against themselves; but since the Popish Church do's not avowedly deny the Scriptures divinity of the New Testament and propheties thereof (which is the great advantage we require to have its authority admitted) and their Religion brought to this test, which is the alone rule of all true Religion, and since they must grant that to be joyned with Antichrist or partaker in such a way is most dreadful, and involves them under the greatest of judgments; for it is a matter of no less weight then an eternal salvation or damnation; yea since this concerns Ministers of the Gospel, as one special piece of their work now in the last times to bear witness against Antichrist (that great, we must say the greatest adversary which Christ ever had in the earth) to warne and pursue without ceasing this cast, what ever success it have, that men would come out of Babylon, and haste from under an approaching wrath and vengeance, which on some other ground then appearance we are sure now makes haste; I would here in behalf of the truth offer some queries on this subject (besides any thing hath been already mentioned) and herein appeal the adversary to the Scripture of God, that great and uncontroverted judg, to their conscience, yea to the sober and retired thoughts of such, who are under any awe or impression of a Deity, when they are alone with themselves, if this so remarkable a Prophecy ment the Antichrist and his coming be not now clearly verified, that men may see him with their eyes or else must shut them at such a sight.

1. Is there not a verie full and particular discoverie which the Scripture gives of this great adversarie both in his rise, growth, his reigne and fall, and not by a passing word, whom the Apostle 2 Theff. 2. 3. 4. points out by such peculiar marks, whom John do's describe and difference from all other Antichrists that were only to be his forerunners & shewes him a more noted and principal adversarie of Christ above others; yea, we have through the whole Revelation most clearly discovered under different styles what he should be, and what a sore and long trial the Christian Church was to have under his reigne, I profess when I read the Scripture and there sees so expresse and clear a forewarning which many ages before we have aient the coming of this adversarie, with such peculiar distinguishing circumstances and marks as are at this day most exactly verified in the event, I am constrain'd to admire at so convincing and unanswerable a witness to the Scriptures divinity, and must think it strange how men at such a rate can wrestle against the truth, except by getting a victorie over their conscience and putting the light in fetters, whilst they own these Prophecies of the New Testament to be of divine verity, which they so evidently distort against the clear sense and meaning thereof; yea, do adventure such a commentarie on the same, that manifestly destroy's the text.

2. Can you possibly expect *Antichrist* his coming to the world now according to the Scripture, if he be not already revealed, when his forerunners were so many ages before, even in the times of the Apostles to shew he was then coming, I must ask, if this adversary should this day begin to appear, could you judg this is he. or reconcile such a contradiction how he is now breaking up who was beginning to discover himself 1500 years agoe, for it is so long since the Apostle shew'd this mystery of iniquity was working 2 Theff. 2. 7. which clearly points at Antichrist, who then was hatching, though not on such a growth and ascendant as after; and could he be yet latent, yet in the bud, hath there been no further advance after so many

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ages, hath this mystery yet not wrought it self above ground? O where hath he been? that such a working thing, so dreadful a spark could keep so many ages under ashes, and to flame, no fire perceived? for it is sure if he was then at work, he hath not yet ceased; yea, if you admit the Scripture, is not the rising of the Turkish Empire in the order of the trumpets clearly after the revealing of the Antichrist, and this horrid scourge held forth Rev. 9. 20. as a remarkable judgment from the Lord, on the Christian world then turn'd Antichristian for their idolatry, worshipping of images, &c. which was not brought in to the Church till the man of sin was towards his height.

3. Is not this unanswerably manifest that he who did withould, and as a barr restrained Antichrists coming for a time, cannot now be standing in the way? You see the Scripture shew's expressly there is a barr must be removed, and then should this man of sin be revealed, and this cannot be doubted but that some temporal power was hereby meant which did then forcibly withstand as the original word ~~express~~ imports, for it is very clear whilst the Roman Empire was heathen, he could not brook Rome, or as a Monarch have his seat in that city with seven hills, he could not then both sit in the temple of God and have the Kings of the earth to give their power with consent to him: Now let me but appeal men to their reason and judgment if any such barr could be yet standing after so great, yea such innumerable mutations and changes of the world? when many ages since, there have been such various successions of States and Kingdomes, and a wearing out of greatest families, how any temporal power could be since the dayes of the Apostles a continued let in the way of the adversary.

4. This query I would seriously offer, if such a party can be found the day to whom all the markes of Antichrist held forth by the Scripture do's truly agree, could you then deny he is come, if so be you looke for such an Antichrist, and under that cognisance, as the holy Ghost points him forth in the word? O will you be so much in earnest with your conscience as to suffer the truth come this neer, that you may
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impartially judg what is there of the Prophecies, that concerns Antichrist coming in the world, which is not now verified in the event, before your eyes, and admit the Scripture but judg therein, whether there is any such particular distinguishing badg, and marke, held forth in that blessed record for his discovery, which do's not convincingly quadrat with the Pope, and his followers.

5. I shall in this also appeal your conscience if there be now or hath been under the new Testament an other party or such an adversary to the Church of Christ to whom these distinguishing characters of Antichrist could agree, such as one who should be no open adversary, but sit in the temple of God under the vail of a friend with a shew of great wonders and miracles; and yet under that shew exalt himself against God, I know you will deny that this hath a clear respect to the Popish party or is justly applicable to them; but I am sure if without a præjudicat byas, you would seriously judg, and abstract from application, in this you could not deny an assent that such a party, whosoever he be, bears that great badg of Antichrist, in exalting himself against God; who as a friend doth assume these titles, only due and competent to the glorious God, and to the Mediator, to be Head and chief Doctor of the Catholick Church, and aleadges her for his spouse, who challenges an infinite power by making use of that *Mat. 28: v. 18. All power is given unto me, &c.* which that book intituled Pontifical ceremonies do's assert. *Lib. 1. fol. 36.* who assumes an authority to bind mens conscience by his law, and to free their conscience from these laws which are divine and unchangable, who appoints divine worship and adoration to creatures, by directing prayers to them, do's subject the faith of the Church to the determination of a man, in which, as infallible, all must rest, is not that a dethroning of him; who is the great Prophet and teacher of his Church; yea, a making his authority voide; now beside these distinguishing characters, which the Scripture, so expressly gives of Antichrist; are not these also so notoure and plain that I think it strange how men can have their reason and

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judgment in exercise, and not know to whom they belong: I mean the forbidding of marriage, and the use of meats which the Apostle holds forth 1 Tim. 4. 3. and Rev. 18. 13. you have there a merchandise with the souls of men, and O can any be in the dark who these are, who have such apeculiar traffick with this ware, by redeeming souls for money, and making a sale of pardons and indulgences which concern mens souls; I shall adde that likewyse Rev. 9. 20. the worshipping of idols of gold and silver, and herein crave the world to be judg, yea can appeale some of their own greatest writers if this be not both the doctrine and the practice of the Romish Church, which one of the most learn'd among them do's expressly assert, that the images of the Trinity are not set up for a shew but for Religious adoration, and is not this a most direct making void of the moral law, which so expressly forbids any worshipping of the invisible God under the similitude of a corruptible man, or under any visible representation.

6. Is not this foretold of Antichrist, what a dominion he should have over the Kings of the earth. Rev. 17. 18. unto whom they should agree and give their power and Kingdomes to support his interest; now if this be not convincingly verified, and hath been for many ages in the Pope, it is easy to judge; and I am sure his followers would be loath to deny a thing, in which they so much boast: I confess were it not thus foretold by the Scripture, we could not think it credible, how the Kings and great men of the earth should be in such a measure bewitched, to enslave themselves, and their interest to that party, and yeeld to so strange a subjection under their yoke, it seems so very irrational, yea like an infatuation, since they cannot but see under what a terrour he keeps them by his interdictions, by assuming a power to loose subjects from any ty to their Princes, and thus binding and loosing their conscience at his pleasure, what interest he hath in their counsils, by that subtle device of auricular confession, what intollerable homage and service he requires from Princes, what vast treasure he draws for support of his Hierachy from these places

places where he hath power; yea, what a visible tendency his aſtings have to promote a worldly intereſt, and make the great men of the earth dependent on him; how eaſily he can diſpenſe with the greateſt breaches of the moral law, whilſt moſt cruel and inexorable in any thing that comes with his power and ſupremacy: O how aſtoniſhing might this blinde devoring of great men both themſelves and their power, to the ſupport of ſuch an intereſt be, if we had not a clear reſolution from the Scripture, that this is from the Lord, who hath put it in their heart, and ſo far gives them up in his ſecret judgment.

7. I muſt aſk, is not that a convincing witneſs to the Scripture, and a clear argument for the Proteſtant reformed Church, which you ſo much object againſt her, that her condition for ſo many ages hath been low and abject, and did ſo little appear, whilſt the Popiſh intereſt was reſplendent and flouriſhing; for it is ſure ſuch a long continued ſuffering, and latent condition of the Church under Antichriſt is expreſſly foretold, wherein the witneſſes ſhould be put to prophesie in ſackcloth, and the poor woman (which is meant of the Church) put to flee to the wildernes and be there hid; ſo that you cannot ſay the Church and followers of Chriſt have been more low in theſe worſt and darkeſt times, then the word holds her out to be; yet hath there been ſtil a ſucceſſion and ſome witneſſes for the truth, and the Church thus continued in all theſe times, which as one excellently ſayes, was like a freſh river that made her way through that horrid lake of Antichriſtianiſm without mixing therewith, and at laſt did break up gloriously.

8. Is not the Antichriſt in a ſpecial way pointed out in the Scripture, by ſome proper marke, ſome viſible ſign and cogniſance, which his followers ſhould receive, for differencing them for any other partie, Rev. 13. 16. now in this I deſire the World, and commonest obſervers, to judge if theſe many ſtrange ceremonies, and rites of the Romiſh Church, their diſtinguiſhing ſigns, and badges, which they ſo much own, and indispensibly require, as

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visible characters of their profession, yea are so peculiar to that partie beyond others, do not convincingly quadrat with the Scripture hierern, and most clearly verifie the same in the event, the World knows, and the ordinary way and practice of these can witnes that frequent use (oh a most horrid, idolatrous abuse) of the sign of the cross which not only in a special manner they take as a differencing badg of their partie from others, by so frequent a crossing of their forehead, and breast, and putting this as their mark on all they baptise, or receive by confirmation, but does ascribe also to it an effective and operative power, and as a charm or magical sign, makes use of it to effect things supernatural, to restrain sin, drive away the Devil; for thus they conjure spirits, thus they wear it in their rings, and pendiaries; yea is it not by them adored and worshipped, and made use of for the blessing and consecration of all other things sure this can be no matter of debate, since it is so known and obvious, and that it is easy thus to discern a Roman Catholick, if he but avow his profession, by such a visible sign, and find him but by his mark; which that partie does pursue with greatest fervour, and thereby correspond and discover themselves one to another.

I shall further adde, is not this the *Antichrist*, whose name must be understood, and reckoned by the number thereof, which is the number of a man, *Rev. 13. Last. ver. 1.* It is true this seems very dark, and mysterious, and in stead of a more clear discoverie, might rather be judged a drawing a veil over this adversary, but since we have the Scriptures expresse call and warrant, to make a serious inquiry and search about its meaning, yea does not onlie hold it forth as duetie, but shews such a thing is attainable, and may be understood, I shall desire in humble sobriety, without peremptory asserting, to offer some few thoughts on this Scripture, both as to its meaning, and how clearly the man of sin is thus pointed out, and his name made known by the number thereof; anent which I humbly judg (and must therein crave liberty to differ from others, and these whose judgment I most highly respect) that this number as it is

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here set down is explicatory, and given as the very key to the Church, for opening up the mystery of this name, and of that man of whom also it is the number, and thus shew it is not to be reckoned as the name of a single person, but is it to be found by Arithmetick computation in the numeral letters of a man, but is the name of a politick body, name which comprehends a plurality, such as these numerous orders and degrees of the pontificall Hierarchy are, and by such a scale, his number does remarkably ascend in so many degrees, until it terminat in a man even in one absolute Monarch, and universal Head, as the very Summe totalis in whom that whole number resolves, and therefore it is the number of a man; yea by this reckoning we may thus clearly know, what a man that is, that as he cannot be known, if we take him alone, without respect to a politick body, and the whole complex Hierarchy, of which number he is made up, as the constituent parts, we may also understand, by this computation, the Antichrist with respect to a long continued series, and succession, which here the Scripture shews to the Church, that he is not a single individual person only, or such a politick body of many numerous degrees, resolving in one head, which should be but for an age, or of a short duration; but that he is an adversary who is to be continued in a numerous succession through a series of many ages; and thus may the man of sin and his name be understood, by this number of which he is made up; now in this, I humbly judg, the scope of the Scripture is clear, in setting down such a rule to count Antichrist by his number, and thus does Prophetically obviat that great mistake after ages would fall in, and is to this day entertained, that this adversary is but one individual person, who should get up, and cause a remarkable Apostacy in the Church; therefore it is that the World will not know this is he, when they see him before their eyes, not considering that such a numerous body, and succession is contained in his name, from which he cannot be separat.

But for further clearing, I shall offer some few things

to be seriously considered in his reckoning; *First*, Here is a number, and plurality, by the Holy Ghost particularly set down, by which Antichrist must be known and counted, and the tie is so close betwixt him and his number, that both the man, and his name is formally made up thereof. 2. Here is a number, which is not to be sought after by the subtile computations of Arithmetick, or any curious inquiry in the numeral letters of a mans name, since thus we cannot know the true use of Christian wisdom, and prudence which the Scripture requires; yea it is clear this way might answer several other names as well as Latinos, which could not in an ordinary way be determined, without a pretending to some extraordinary revelation, and discovery; but here may be judged work for spiritual wisdom, to count this number of Antichrist, and his name, with respect to his nature, frame, and composition. 3. Here is such a number which is all summed up in one man, and cannot otherways be counted or understood, but as it hath a respect to a single person, in a continued succession wherein it resolves; now is there not such a number to which the Pope stands as nearly related, as the total summe is to these degrees, and lesser numbers of which it is made up? And here is wisdom, to joyn aright that man of sin, and his number, and there see how exactly they quadrat in the event, and each gives light to an other. 4. We finde here a large number, wherein there is a plurality of many different degrees, rising above other, and is therefore definitely expressed by so great a number as 666. 5. This is also a number and herein there seems clear ground for such a remark) which is most unit and compact, with a close concatenation, a remarkable order and rising from a lower to a higher degree, with a special subordination and dependance on other; yea is thus knit, that one part comprehends the other; such as is most clear and obvious, in that subtile politick constitution of the Romish State, and that numerous Hierarchy, with which this definite number of 666 seems marvellously to quadrat, whereas by a scale of so many steps, and degrees, you may follow up this number,

number, as it were from six to sixty, &c. by Deans, Provincials, Generals of Orders, to Bishops, thence Archbishops, Primats, Patriarchs, Cardinals, until you find all resolve in one man; who is as straitly related to it as a name can be to so many syllables whereof it is made up. Now known this may seem too curious an inquiry, and not so fitting the gravity and weight of the Scripture, but since the Spirit of God hath choised such a definite number by another, wherein there is so strange an order and quadration, to discover that adversary, and gives us such ground that his number points at his frame and composition, I think without any challenge of unfobriety such a remark very futable. 6. Whilst the Scripture shews, this is the number of a man, and of his name, does it not also shew it is such a number that lies nearest Antichrist, and is most straitly related to him, and as the formale cause does most specially concur in his constitution, yea gives as it were life to that image; now let it be seriously considered what this is, yea whither that mystery of Antichristianism does not in a peculiar way ly in his Supremacy, and being infallible and the ultimat judg of controversies, which he claims as absolute Head of the Church universal, and that fountain whence all these degrees of power in the Romish Hierarchy do flow, and in whom they fully terminat; for it is clear thence are all these gross tenets, and corruption in doctrine; thus he most directly exalts himself against God, and puts the Mediator off his throne; thus he does exerce authority over mens conscience; thus Antichristianism, and that avowed opposition to Jesus Christ takes life, is nourished and hath its strength, even under these wings of his absolute supremacy; now if it be clear, this is the number which lyeth nearest to Antichrist, from which he can no wayes be separated, and does most formally make up that man of sin, then by the exercise of Christian wisdom may that number, and its true meaning be thence understood. 7. Is not this such a number that is peculiarly restricted, in a classe by it self, which the 18 Verse does shew, wherein that great Bulk of the Romish Church is not to be sought; for though it is there

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there clear, that such who receive the mark, and by some visible profession own the doctrine of the Romish Church, are of the largest extent, and therefore it is said, great and small, rich and poore, must come that length, yet as to the number of the beast, and of his name, it is expressed by its self, and as a higher classe in which all of the common rank who must receive the mark does not fall; but as lying more close and near to Antichrist, is in a peculiar manner restricted by a distinguishing note; which a serious study of that Scripture will help to clear. (¶)

XI. What was prophesied anent *the killing of the witnesses under Antichrist*, Rev. II: v. 3, 7, 8. we say hath clearly come to passe, and at this day may read the same in the event, for it is manifest.

1. That duering Antichrists reigne even in the darkeſt times, there wanted not some to seale the truth, and bear witness thereto, both by open confession, and suffering on that account, which the Church Histories can abundantly make out.

2. That during that dark night these who did give a testimony, and any way appeared against the grievous encroachments of Antichrists in behalf of down born truth, were put to prophecy in sackcloth, when there was nothing left, but to weep over the Churches ruines, and witness their deſtation, and grief for the growing Apostacy of such times.

3. It is clear, that as the prophecy doth point at some more remarkable suffering, and persecution, which the Church was to meet with from Antichrist, beyond all it had endured from that adversary in former ages, yea, a special permission from the Lord to that party, to vent their rage and cruelty against the Saints, which should fall out after the witnesses finishing their testimony, who had so long in an abject low condition, as in sackcloth prophesied, when Antichrist should be at his height, and his Kingdome upon the turn, that then must this remarkable killing of the witnesses be accomplished; so, likewise did the event convincingly verify the same, for it is known that upon the close

number, as it were from six to sixty, &c. by Deans, Provincials, Generals of Orders, to Bishops, thence Archbishops, Primats, Patriarchs, Cardinals, until you find all resolve in one man; who is as straitly related to it as a name can be to so many syllables whereof it is made up. known this may seem too curious an inquiry, and not so fitting the gravity and weight of the Scripture, but since the Spirit of God hath choised such a definite number by another, wherein there is so strange an order and quadrature to discover that adversary, and gives us such ground that his number points at his frame and composition, I think without any challenge of unsobriety such a remark very futable. 6. Whilst the Scripture shews, this is the number of a man, and of his name, does it not also shew it is such a number that lies nearest Antichrist, and is most straitly related to him, and as the formale cause does most specially concur in his constitution, yea gives as it were life to that image; now let it be seriously considered what this is, yea whither that mystery of Antichristianism does not in a peculiar way ly in his Supremacy, and being infallible and the ultimat judg. of controversies, which he claimes as absolute Head of the Church universal, and that fountain whence all these degrees of power in the Romish Hierarchy do flow, and in whom they fully terminat; for it is clear thence are all these gross tenets, and corruption in doctrine; thus he most directly exalts himself against God, and puts the Mediator off his throne; thus he does exerce authority over mens conscience; thus Antichristianism, and that avowed opposition to Jesus Christ takes life, is nourished and hath its strength, even under these wings of his absolute supremacy; now if it be clear, this is the number which lyeth nearest to Antichrist, from which he can no wayes be separated, and does most formally make up that man of sin, then by the exercise of Christian wisdom may that number, and its true meaning be thence understood. 7. Is not this such a number that is peculiarly restricted, in a classe by it self, which the 18 Verse does shew, wherein that great Bulk of the Romish Church is not to be sought; for though it is there

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there clear, that such who receive the mark, and by some visible profession own the doctrine of the Romish Church, are of the largest extent, and there fore it is said, great and small, rich and poore, must come that length, yet as to the number of the beast, and of his name, it is expressed by its self, and as a higher classe in which all of the common rank who must receive the mark does not fall; but as lying more close and near to Antichrist, is in a peculiar manner restricted by a distinguishing note; which a serious study of that Scripture will help to clear. (¶)

XI. What was prophesied anent *the killing of the witnesses under Antichrist*, Rev. 11: v. 3, 7, 8. we say hath clearly come to passe, and at this day may read the same in the event, for it is manifest.

1. That duering Antichrists reigne even in the darkeſt times, there wanted not some to seale the truth, and bear witness thereto, both by open confession, and suffering on that account, which the Church Histories can abundantly make out.

2. That during that dark night these who did give a testimony, and any way appeared against the grievous encroachments of Antichrists in behalf of down born truth, were put to prophecy in sackcloth, when there was nothing left, but to weep over the Churches ruines, and witness their detestation, and grief for the growing Apostacy of such times.

3. It is clear, that as the prophecy doth point at some more remarkable suffering, and persecution, which the Church was to meet with from Antichrist, beyond all it had endured from that adversary in former ages, yea, a special permission from the Lord to that party, to vent their rage and cruelty against the Saints, which should fall out: first the witnesses finishing their testimony, who had so long in an abject low condition, as in sackcloth prophesied, when Antichrist should be at his height, and his Kingdome upon the turn, that then must this remarkable killing of the witnesses be accomplished; so, likewise did the event convincingly verifie the same, for it is known that upon the close

of Antichrists reigne, whilst the truth began to break in this sore storme of persecution beyond all that had been before, did then break upon the Church, even in its budding forth, that we may say, that adversary did not only put forth the outmost of his power and rage against the Saints, but seemed in some measure to bring his cruel designe to passe, which the dreadfull massacres in in France, Provence, and the Valleys of Piemont, the sore and violent persecution of the Church, through the Netherlands, under the Duke of Alva, and in Engeland by Queen Mary in Germany after the defeat of the Duke of Saxony, and Landgrave of Hesse can clearly witnes.

4. Is it not also clear, how this remarkable storm, and cutting down of the Saints, over whose dead bodies their adversaries did rejoyce, was according to this prophecy to be previous to some eminent enlargements, and reviving of the Church, which did accordingly fall out in the event like a resurrection of the witnesses from the dead, to the astonishment of the World, that immediately followed upon the back thereof, so that when their enemies thought they had gained their end, as they did conclude by such persecutions, particularly that French massacre that the Protestant interest should be quite ruined, they were forced to see their labour in vain, and the Church more eminently flourishing after the same.

I shall further adde, that Antichrist hath not onely been revealed, and his Kingdome come to its height, but it is clear this day that it is on the falling hand, and his ruine is now begun, upon which account we may say, yea, have cause to sing that the winter is past the fig tree putteth forth her leaves, that sheweth the sommers approach, yea, like singing of birdes is heard in our land, let us go forth, and meet him who is now gone out as a mighty man, for the salvation of his Church, and takes the fields against this great adversary of his truth and people, on whose side victory doth surely wait.

II. WHAT IS YET TO BE ACCOMPLISHED.

HAVING touched a little some of the most concerning prophecies of the Scripture, both under the New and Old Testament, which are already fulfilled and the truth thereof so clearly written forth in the history of providence, that we may say the most ordinary observers, if they will not shut their eyes, cannot want a conviction thereof, I shall now in the next place point at that which yet remaineth of the propheticall part of the Scripture, to be accomplished; these prophecies which concern the Church in these last times, whereby we may have a sure demonstration, how far the night is spent, and of the near approach of that blessed day of the liberty of the sonnes of God, for this doth finish the mystery of God, and fully perfecteth his work, if once that which remaineth of the prophecies of the word were fulfilled.

There are these truths the accomplishment whereof we have a sure warrant, to expect before the end; First, the full ruin, and downfal of Babylon. 2. The conversion, and incalling of the Jewes to Jesus Christ. 3. A solemn day of the Churches flourishing, both Jewes, and Gentiles. which shall follow the outmaking of the former promise. 4. The fall, and destruction of the Turkish Empire, that cruel party who have been raised up, and established for judgment, with whom the Lord shall yet reckon, for all that Christian blood by them, so unjustly shed, seemeth clearly held forth, *Rev. 16: ver. 12.* 5. We are also to expect after all these, that full, and last stroke upon Gog, and Magog, and then the Lord is at hand, and that great mystery of the prophecies, and promises of the Scripture, shall then be finished, and at a blessed close.

1. We have have the full ruin and destruction of *antichrist*, and his *Kingdome* clearly prophesied, and in very expresse termes promised to the Church, 2 *Thess.* 2: *ver.* 2. & *Rev.* 16: *ver.* 10, and 17. the accomplishment whereof we do yet according to the Scripture wait for, that the God of truth who cannot lye or repent, shall in due time assuredly bring about, and that approacheth when that solemn cry shall be heard, *Babylon is fallen*, anent which we would consider.

1. That this judgment is already begun and the first step thereof visible is now clear, wherein men may see the event most exactly answer the prophecy, for the Lord hath begun to consume Antichrist by the breath of his mouth and since the first breaking up of the light, his Kingdome hath been mouldering down before the Word, have not Nations fallen off at the voice of the preached Gospel? It is true the Church wanteth not sore conflicts, even under the *Vials*, and it is the Lords way to try his People with such various uncertainties, that when things have been most promising, another providence cometh like a crosse wave, which seemeth to drive them as far back as once they seemed to be forward, yet it is sure, and should be beyond debate, that Antichrists overthrow is upon a present advance, and that work of the Lord for his Churches deliverance is going forward, for if we believe salvation by Christ upon the warrant of the word, should we not also with much assurance believe that Antichrists wound is deadly, and incurable, which he hath got by the preaching of the Gospel, which all the Physitians of the earth shall never help.

2. This is one of the greatest, and signal acts of the judgment of God on his Churches enemies, one of the most eminent manifestations of his glory which he hath reserved for the last times, wherein, the appearance of his hand and great power shall be very manifest, and we are to expect by this remarkable stroke that way shall be made for that glorious house, which Christ is to have for himself in the latter dayes, which shall be built upon Antichrists ruines, when

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when that new bride both of Jewes, and Gentiles, shall
e prepared for the marriage supper of the Lamb.

3. Though we are to expect on clear ground from the
word, the Lords eminent appearing by his immediat hand
in this great work which shall be so convincing in that day,
and witnes an extraordinary providence, that all onlookers
must with fear and astonishment confesse that this is Gods
own work, yet, it is also clear, that he will therein make
use of instruments fitted, and chosen for that end, who
shall be raised, and acted forth with a more then ordinary
Spirit, to execute the vengeance of the Lord, even the
judgment written, amongst whom the feeble shall then be
strong, yea, we have ground to expect, that of the Kings
of the earth, and the race and successours of these, who in
former times had given their power to the Beast, shall the
Lord raise up to hate the whore, and make her desolate;
O blessed are they who shall have a hand in so noble a work
to sack, and destroy that accursed City, built up with the
blood of the Saints, and martyres of Jesus Christ.

4. We are not to bound the Lord, as to any particular
time for accomplishing this piece of his word, yet, we have
clear ground to believe that Babylons ruin maketh hast, and
the day of the Lord upon her is near, whose sword is bathed
in Heaven, and that the instruments of his vengeance are
making ready, one stroke upon that party is already past,
Antichrist hath begun to fall before the word, and must fall
further until that great stroke, which shall destroy his seat,
and lay wast that land, be accomplished; some promising
evidences of its near approach I would here point at. 1.
The many prayers of the saints, which are now before the
throne, and cannot want a return, many who wrestled oft
with the Lord on this accompt, though they are away,
yet, are their prayers to the fore, and waits for this solemn
manifestation of the judgment of God, and the blood
of the Saints doth not cease to cry, yea, hath as loud a cry
as ever. 2. It is clear that the preached Gospel now since
the light began to break forth doth ripen, and help to make
the harvest more white then many ages formerly, and truly

if we consider how long the word hath been something a retreat to that party, to come out of Babylon, and for these 150 years they have been still acting in opposition to so clear a light, to such a solemn call, so many warnings, yea, to such convincing discovery of the Lords being against them in very remarkable providences, doth it not shew, at what an height their sin this day is, and an obstinate rejecting of cure? 3. We cannot but see, how that judgment which should be poured forth on Antichrist under the vials, is in a great measure now verified in the event. 4. It is clear, and consonant to the Scripture, that the Lords work is now hastening in the latter dayes, providence in a swift motion and maketh great advance, more quick changes in the case of the Church both as to stormes, and calmes, and her trials now must not be so so long as in former time. *Rom. 9: ver. 28.* he will cut short his work in righteousness, for a short work will the Lord make in the earth. 5. That Antichrist and his followers, do this day seem to be at such an advantage, the Lords work, as it were at a stand, yea, rather going back, this late reviving of Antichristian Popery in Brittain, and Ireland, with so visible a growth of Popery there, and so dark an houre upon the reformed Churches abroad, I think, on very solid grounds is a promising evidence, of the near approach of a further stroke on that party; for it is clear both from the word, and Gods ordinary way of procedure how a sharp storm is usually previous to some remarkable enlargement of the Church, as very low ebb, before the turning of the tide, yea, at every step of her advance, wherereby she hath gained ground on Antichrist, hath still had some conflict, and wrestling going before, and thus the Lord by suffering doth triall his People for such times of mercy; for which times, let us pray, and wait, when the smoke of that accursed City shall ascend up to Heaven, and his People be made to triumph in his praise, and sing that song, *Hallelujah, salvation, glory, and honour to the Lord God, who hath judged the great whore, rejoyce over her thou Heaven, and ye Apostles, and Prophets, for God hath avenged you upon her.*

II. We have a clear prophecy anent, *the in calling of the Jews*, and their conversion to Christ in the latter dayes, held forth by the prophets, and in the New Testament very expressely mentioned, for the fulfilling whereof the Church must yet wait, and long after, when God shall bring again the captivity of his auncient People, and say to that valley of dry bones *live*, anent which we would consider, *Isai. 11: ver. 15. Rom. 11: ver. 14. Rev. 16: ver. 12.*

1. That this promise doth not onely concern particular persons, or a few, but the body, and generality of that people, is most clear from the Scripture, if men would compare *Isai. 11: ver. 11. Zach. 12: ver. 10. with Rom. 11: ver. 25.* where it is undenyable that their gathering must be as full, and remarkable as their scattering; and as there is no nation so remote whither some of them are not this day, that shall not hinder the fulfilling of the promise, but as *Esaï* sheweth, the Lord shall then assemble the dispersed and outcasts, and bring them back from the foure corners of the earth, and furthest places thereof, yea, doth not the Apostle expressly shew that it is all Israel, whereat this promise pointeth, for though they are enemies concerning the Gospel, yet are they beloved for the fathers sakes, because of the Covenant which was made with Abraham, and his seed, and truly we have in this, ground also to expect something further then their conversion, that in this day, the Lord shall raise the tabernacle of David which is fallen, and plant them upon their own land, *Amos 9: ver. 11, 15.* not only bring them to a visible Church state, but even therewith some temporal restitution, and recollection of them as a Nation, yea, may expect a return of the old blessing of that lands fruitfulness which I think is clearly held forth in that of *Amos 9: ver. 14.* that the very hills drop down sweet wine and melt as it were in outward blessings on them.

2. That this promise hath not yet had an accomplishment, is also clear from the Word, for it must follow the rejection of that People, and should not take place until the

the fulnes of the gentiles be brought in; which harvest for many ages after was not to be reaped; yea, did not the Apostle hold this forth as a myſtery, a piece of the Scripture, which the auncient Jewiſh Church could not well comprehend, when it was pointed at by the Prophets, and even at that time was not underſtood, which ſurely could have been no myſtery if their converſion had reached no further then the Apoſtles time; and it is known, how ſmall a number ſince of that People hath yet been brought in to Chriſt.

3. We have much ground from the Scripture, that this day, this great day of Iezreel ſhall be a very remarkable and ſolemn time, which will cauſe aſtoniſhment to the Nations about, and make a wonderful change on the face of the earth, a time of Gods eminent appearance for that People, when his ſingular reſpect ſhall be as manifeſt as formerly his great diſpleaſure and anger was, a time on which many of the choiſeſt mercies of the Church do certainly wait, the return of many prayers, a large pouring forth of the Spirit, even on the body of that People and all ranks, not only the families of David, Nathan, and Levi, but alſo the families of Shimei, with a large outletting of gifts, yea, ſuch a time, wherein the converted of Iſrael ſhall then ſee and underſtand, how far the glory of the ſecond Temple doth exceed that of the firſt, and ſhall be a very conſpicuous part of Chriſts univerſal Kingdome, eminent for the power, and purity of the ordinances, to which others ſhall look as to a moſt choiſe and excellent patern of a purely reformed, and glorious Church.

4. Beſides the promiſe of him who is not like man, to lie, or the ſon of man to repent, there wants not ſome very convincing providences to confirm our faith anent this, if we conſider how this People are ſtill kept by themſelves, amidſt all their ſcatterings not mixt or incorporat with other Nations, which is moſt uſuall through long converſe that people of ſeveral parts of the earth will unite and joyn in one, is not their great increaſe alſo remarkable? What great multitudes of them are in the eaſtern parts, yea, through moſt of Aſia,

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Africk, and in these places of Europe where the Christian Church is, and all this time their land not possessed but by a rabble of the Turks under whose yoke they groan, and though the genealogies of particular families are at this day much lost, yet there is still so much sure, and evident, as to the series, and genealogy of the Nation that doth difference them from any other People.

5. It is true the authority of the word should silence all our thoughts, how so great a thing shall be brought about, yet, we may judg, that as a mean this shall eminently contribute to the same, such a convincing stroke upon Antichrist which must go before their conversion, wherein so manifest an appearance of God, and the fulfilling of one of the greatest promises of the New Testament, cannot but stare them in the face, and with this the taking away of that stumbling block of idolatry which hath so long helpt to harden them against the profession of the Gospel.

I must shut up this with a sad regrate that whilest we have so clear a promise, there is no more tender respect, and further essay to promot the good of that People, who knoweth what a blessing might attend the use of ordinary means? since this is an unquestionable duty, and men know not when they sow the seed, whither this, or that shall prosper, alace that the usual deportment of Christians with whom they converse, doth oft further help to highten their prejudice against Christianity; let us long, and pray more for this day, a day which shall bring so great a blessing with it to the gentiles.

III. There are many prophecyces both in the Old and New Testament which do clearly point at *a great flourishing and prosperity in the dayes of the Gospel* which I humbly conceive are not yet fully made out, but shall have a more remarkable accomplishment before the close of time, *Isai. 65: ver. 25. Isai. 66: ver. 12. Mich. 4: ver. 1. 2.*

I confesse the event will be the surest commentary, and until this appear men should be sober, and cautious, that they darken not the counsel of God, and his truth, with any

any wilde fancy, and aim to be wise above that which is written, yet, I must think that there are great things laid up in these promises for the Church, that we cannot now well reach, yea, would scarce get believed until the appointed time unvail their meaning, I shall here but only touch how it may appear these promises are not yet fully accomplished, and what with a safe warrant we may expect in their accomplishment, as to the first we would consider these things.

1. That these great promises which hold forth so eminent an enlargement, and flourishing of the Church, do also point at some particular limited time, some period, and revolution of the Churches condition, which is not agreeable and common to other times, until which these promises do not take place.

2. This promised flourishing concerneth both Jewes, and Gentiles, and the word doth clearly point at some further encrease of the gentile Church by the calling of the Jewes, which must have a peculiar respect to that solemn time of Israels restoration, and Antichrists ruin, a time in which the return of many prayers, and the fulfilling of many promises in the behalfe of the Church doth surely wait; so that as Esay, and, other of the Prophets do point over this great flourishing of the Church to the dayes of the Gospel, the Apostle *Rom. 11.* doth point at a more precise time, wherein this in a larger measure shall be made out.

3. We cannot find the Christian Church did ever enjoy so great an enlargement, and flourishing state as these promises seem to import, for persecution and suffering hath most been her lot, first from the Jewes, next from heathen adversaries, and last from Antichrist, whose fall and ruin we have ground to expect shall make room for so great an increase of the Church, for how much power Antichrist hath, in so far is the Church kept under, yea, it is clear how very short all her breathings have been.

4. It would appear so solemn a time of the Churches flourishing whereat the Prophets did so oft point, as it

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hath an undoubted respect to the dayes of the Gospel, so in its full accomplishment must answer to that remarkable day of Satans binding, and the Saints Reigne with Christ, when the Kingdoms of the Earth become the Lords, which we find doth immediatly preceed Satans last loos- ing, and his going forth to gather his broken forces, for that great battel which is to be very near the end.

I shall but adde, we have ground to judg the Lord will usher in that glorious everlasting state of the Church, even by some preparative degrees here, the latter times are there- fore to be reckoned the more blessed, the more near they approach to the dawning of glory.

Now in the second place I shall but point at some things which with a safe warrant, we may understand, and look after, in the accomplishment of these promises.

It is very clear they hold forth a great enlargement to the universal Church both of Jewes, and Gentiles, particular Churches may be in a sad withering condition whilst other parts do flourish, but these promises seem to point at a day, which will concern the saints in all corners of the earth, who shall not want their share with the rest of that blessed time, it may be also clear, some more bright, and hot sun-shine of the Gospel is held forth, some such remarkable spring-tide of the Spirit that shall beas discern- able as the Churches low ebbe sometimes was, a day of the great people of God, his presence very manifest among his people, and with the ordinances, beyond former times, so that Ezek. 48. ver. 35. the name of that place shall be called Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there, yea, that in this day Christ visible Kingdome in a settled Church- state shall more eminently flourish, and the flowing in of people and nations with much fervour, who shall joyn themselves to the Lord, pure ordinances, a more univer- sal onesse amongst the worshippers of God, the walk of Christians with a discernable lustre of holines, made to commend the Gospel, Christs goings full of Majesty, and the shout of a King which then shall be heard among his People,

People, the noyse of such sad complaints, and bitter exercises from the spirit of bondage, not so much among the saints as in former times, and though we see no sure ground from the word to expect such a favourable time wherein the Church militant shall not have trouble and persecution from the World, yet, there seemeth so much clearly imported in some of these great promises, as point at a great calm, and more favourable gale of outward prosperity, which the Church shall then have, yea, this in some longer continuance then in former ages, a day wherein the haters of the Lord shall even be made to feign subjection, with much of the countenance, and concurrence of Magistrates, and the civil authority in behalfe of the Church; yea, a time of much holy fear amongst the people of God, and of much terrour, and awe upon his enemies, to which the great works of the Lord in that time shall then effectually contribute, and cause them fear the Lord, and his goodness in the latter dayes.

(¶) IV. There is a special prediction of Satans binding up and restraint, and of some remarkable reigne of the Church with Jesus Christ held forth. *Rev. 20. 2.* The full accomplishment of which we on clear ground may judge is not yet come, yet is so far now verified in the event as may clearly witness its meaning, and let us see how at this day it is taking place; I confess this seems one of the most dark and abstruse prophecies we have in the Scripture, on which there hath been many strange thoughts, and glosses held forth; but to set down these various judgments of men on the truths of God, I humbly think may tend to a further darkning of the same, more then to any solide edification, I shall only offer some things to be considered, which by undeniable consequence from the Scripture seem most clear and obvious, and may not only help to understanding this Prophecie, but that manifest correspondence which is betwixt it and the event at this day.

1. There can be no debate this solemne time of the Saints reigne with Christ concerns the militant condition of the Church,

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Church, and must be expected here in the earth, not in heaven, and therefore we finde immediatly after, there is a very sore assault of the Devil held forth, who should occasion a new triall to the Church and be for a time let loose to deceive the nations. 2. Since the Scripture is the best interpreter of it self, we must here understand with comparing one place with another this raising of the Saints and Martyrs of Jesus Christ to reigne with him figuratively, and in such a sense as that in. *Rev. 11. 11.* must be understood, to wit a rising of the witnesses in the same spirit and power, and of such a party who should bear the same testimony, to which all that is *Mal. 4. 5.* and *Mat. 11. 14.* anent Johns coming in the same Spirit of Elijah with which he did appear to the World gives light, so that we see how consonant and agreeable Scripture is with it self. 3. Is not the meaning of the Spirit in this prophesy clear, that the greatest enlargement of the Church yea of the longest duration and continuance that it should have under the new Testament unto the second coming of Christ is held forth in the reigne of the saints, so that it manifestly points at a more solemne time a more sweet refreshing interval; which shall be remarkable both in measure and duration beyond all she formerly had, and shews that there is no such a happy time else to go over the Churches head till she be triumphant in heaven, therefore it is called *ἡ βασιλεία* the Churches reigne, considered comparatively with any other such change. 4. Is it not very clear that this so remarkable time cannot be judged previous to Antichrists coming, nor under his advance and growth, since first this points expressly at these who were beheaded for the witness of Christ, and had not worshiped the beast and his image nor received his marke, who should thus be raised to reigne with Christ. 2. We finde that it doth very immediately preceed that last assault the Church shall have upon Satans loosing to gather the nations to that great battel, and so must concerne these last times; when the Lord is pouring out his vials upon the throne and Kingdome of the beast; it is strange when the Scripture is so plain that

some choyse and excellent men writing on this prophesie will have it contemporat with the Churches condition before Antichrists appearance, for it is sure if by the bea and his image and mark Antichrist must be understood, and if there be but one great assault mentioned after this which the Church militant shall have before the close of time, this prophesie must now be fulfilling, and with no other time before this could quadrat according to the Scripture. 5. Is it not clear that this great restraint of Satan is no such absolute binding, that will put the Church wholly beyond trouble and reach of his assaults, no, this belongs to heaven and is there only to be expected; but the Scripture very evidently shew's this shall be such a binding up of Satan, that he should not deceive the nations, nor have that wonted power to darken the face of the Church by any great or universal apostacy during this time; and I am sure it is undeniable, that since the Churches raising from under Antichrist Satan hath been thus restrained, and by all his violent assaults, he hath not reached the full withdrawing of any nation which was brought under the yoke of the Gospel, whatever may be said of poor Bohemia by a violent spate of persecuting so born downe, that this once famous Church is now scattered in other places, where there are yet considerable numbers, yea it is not altogether without hope that the great avenger of blood will yet visite her cruel usage on that bloody Austrian family, and returne yet her captivity again, when it seems now furthest off and hopeless. 6. Must we not see that this great sunshine as it takes in Antichrists fall hath a special respect also to Israels return and conversion, which according to the Scripture is one of the most solemne and flowrishing times that the Christian Church shall have, and therefore shall be to the gentiles as life from the dead; now do but seriously judg what the Churches condition hath been through all the times of the New Testament, first under heathens, and after under the tyranny Antichrist, and now how far providence do's unfold the meaning of this prophesie in the event, since the man of sin began to decline, and I humbly judg, it may be

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easy, to see that at this day it is clearly taking place, though this solemn reign be not yet advanced to its greatest pitch, but will have a more remarkable period ere this prophecy be fully made out. I shall but adde, this resurrection mentioned in the prophecy must be in a spiritual sense understood, and can be no bodily raising of the Saints, since it is so expressly there called the first resurrection to difference it from the second, and is held forth in an opposition to the first death. (¶)

VI. We have a prophecy held forth, *Rev. 16: ver. 12.* which comparing with *Rev. 6: ver. 13.* seemeth clearly to point at *the fall, and destruction of the Turkish Empire* who have been these many ages so great a scourge to the Christian World, for its manifest that this drying up of the river of Euphrates must relate to that very party which we finde in that 9 Chap. raised up from about that river, where the Turk hath so considerable a part of his dominions; it is true the event will more clearly make this known, yet these are undeniable.

1. That such a party was foretold by John in that 9 Chap. and a solemn warning given to the Church of so dreadfull a storm, the time also there pointed forth when Antichrist should be at a great height, yea, the portraiture of such an adversary most evidently held forth, such as indeed they were found to be, a terrible cruel destroying party, and therefore are said to have breastplates of fire, their number also there held out to be a very great multitude, which these huge armies usually brought by the Turk to the field can witness.

2. The cause why the Lord should raise up so dreadful an enemy, and thus let them loose, is also expressly declared in that 9 Chap. 20 ver. that it was in judgment, and for a plague on men for Antichristian idolatry, which then had so much overspread the earth, and it was no wonder, that when so much of the visible Church was turned almost brutish in their Religion, and from the pure worship of God was carried after idols of gold, and silver, the work of

mens hands, that so brutish, and barbarous an adversary should be let out for a scourge; I truly think that as Antichrist, and the abominations of that party hath been hitherto the let of successe against the Turk; so we are not to expect the prospering of any such design, and his fall, and ruin, until the cause be removed; for which the Lord did make use of this dreadful rod.

3. That such a party was raised up according to the prophecy, yea, at the appointed time thereof, is very clear, who like a mighty deluge did overflow a great piece of the earth, and with strange prodigious successe, did overrun much of Asia, some parts of Africk, and brake in on Europe to give work to these kings, and great men, and be a scourge to them who had given their power to uphold the throne of the Beast.

4. There is also clear ground from the Scripture that the Lord shall as eminently appear in the fall, and destruction of this adversary as in the raising of them up, and that by their fall, he is to make way for the accomplishing of his promise, anent the Churches further encrease, his auncient people, whereto this prophecy seems to have a particula respect: this we are to look after as one of the great works of the Lords that is reserved for the latter dayes which shall no lesse shew forth his power and glory, even the drying up of that great Euphrates, then in the day that he divided the sea, and made Jordan a dry channel for his people to go through; we are not to be further positive anent means, and instruments how such a thing shall be brought about, it is enough what the Lord hath spoken, and the word that is gone out of his mouth shall not return in vain.

VII. Now to close this, there is yet one great assault which we finde the Church shall have before the end, and then her warfare will be near finished, anent which the Scripture is clear, that Sathan for a little must be let loose, and that solemn and perfect victory, which the Church in the close of time will get over all adversaries, shall be ushered in with a very sharp trial, and once again this

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will shew its rage, rally its broken scattered forces, in a general muster Rev. 20:8. with as much fury as ever, and there shall the Lord eminently appear, that by one full stroke he may for ever decide that long continued war, and feud betwixt the Church, and her enemies, a deliverance which as it will be the last, so one of the greatest, that ever the Church had, the Lord thus finishing his work of providence by so stately, and magnificent a close; and truly after this we know no more of Canonick Scripture to be fulfilled but the coming of the Lord, when the poor, tost, afflicted Church, shall enter unto a triumphant estate above all the violence, & oppression of men. O blessed, and long looked for day of Christs return to judgment, when the dust of the Saints that for some thousand yeares past have been resting in hope, shall awake, and this earth and all the glory thereof like a poor vain shew disappear? O blessed, and comfortable time in which the saints shall then fully knowe what Heaven is, which they have so oft admired at a distance, to behold his face in whose presence is fulnes of joy, and shall need no further confirmations of the truth of the word, when once this great promise of the Lords return is verified, a promise, wherein all these pretious truths which concerned the Church in her journey, as so many streames, shall empty themselves in this great deep, then there is no more to do, the work of the Gospel is finished, the redeemed all brought in, and the Bride made ready to go forth and meet him, who shall fully satisfy, and comfort his People, according to the dayes of their former affliction, and be for ever their exceeding great reward.

THE FIFTH ARGUMENT.

That which not only is for the most part already accom-
plished, but is a thing whereof we have so sure confirmations,
yea, so great a pledge in our hand from the Lord, that what

The fulfilling

yet remaineth shall be certainly fulfilled, must it not be an undoubted truth? But the Scripture as to these special predictions, that are not yet made out, is such, anent which the Lord hath given his People a very large pledge, and strong confirmations now in these latter times, to believe their certain accomplishment, Therefore, &c.

It is true that a part of the Scripture, some special prophecies, which do concern the state of the Church in these last times, hath not yet had an accomplishment, which are already touched in the former argument, and are indeed so great concerning truths that may cause us sit down, and wonder, when we think these shall shortly come to passe; yet such, whereof we may be fully persuaded, if we consider that they are held forth, and promised by him who is the God of truth, and the begun performance hereof, now so manifest, yea what hath been the Lords way, and the eminent providences of these last times which may fully satisfy our spirits that Gods work is near to a close, and the accomplishing of the whole Scripture now at hand.

I shall here point at some special grounds whence the godly in these times may be thoroughly confirmed anent the truth, and certain outmaking of the Scripture, and these prophecies thereof, that yet are not fulfilled, which we should look on, as a very convincing pledge in our hands of the same.

(¶) First is not the being of the world, yea the heavens and the earth which we see, with the continued course of nature given from the Lord, and held forth to his people, as a witness to his truth, and a sure pledge to confirme their faith anent its accomplishment? That when we look upon the heavens or the earth we may there read a visible seal of the certain performance of the whole Scripture of God, which for that very end are set before our eyes; we have this clear *Jer. 33. ver. 20.* that the Covenant with the day and the night is there given to the Church to confirme that Covenant betwixt the Lord and his people, this

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also is held forth *Jer. 31. ver. 35.* Thus sayth the Lord, who gives the sun a light by day, and the moon and stars by night, if these ordinances shall depart, then may the seed of Israel cease and fall from being a nation, It is also clear *Pf. 89. ver. 2.* That the faithfulness of God is established in the very heavens, and these given as a special convincing pledge to confirme the faith of his people in the matter of his truth, and of the performance of his word, for which we will find in the 37 ver of that Psalm the sun and the moon given to the Church as a witness: is not the rainbow also *Gen. 9.* (though not natural, but an instituted signe, because there is no correspondence betwixt the signe and the thing signified) given as a visible signe of the Covenant of God to seal unto men the assurance of his word and promise?

I must think it strange that we do not consider this world and look on the frame thereof with more astonishment, yea, that it is not a greater and more marvellous thing in our eyes if we would but think seriously, Whence it is and how it came to have a being; let us suppose one were brought forth into the light, from a dark place where he had never seen it before, and there let his eyes wander a litle upon the heavens and the earth, O what a dazling and amazing sight would that be! But it must be said we look on these every day, yet know not how to read or understand, what is written thereon; oh this great universe is for the most part as a sealed book.

But for clearing of this truth there are two things we would gravely consider. 1. Something which must be previously known, and beleaved, that those visible heavens and earth are the very work and product of this God, whose word and promise, we have in the Scripture, and have their being and original from him; for otherwise there could be no reasoning from these anent the truth of his word. 2. We would also consider, what a convincing pledge is here, for confirming our faith of the Scripture, and of the sure performance of all that is yet remaining thereof to be accomplished.

As to the first, it might seem unnecessary so much as

once to mention it, since it is so little questioned, or under debate; but oh it is too clear, that many truths are easily admitted, which are not really believed: I know the world would finde it hard to shift so manifest a demonstration, that this universe is the work and product of the great God, when there is in it so bright a discovery of infinite power and wisdom, truly it is strange how men could admit its being who have denyed its beginning, which not only by faith we understand, but is most evident from solide grounds of reason; and though men are undone with implicite faith and a common assent to the greatest fundamental truths without any solide perswasion thereof, yet the greatest Atheists cannot keep off the discovery of this, but by keeping at a distance from it; which truly Aristotle and others of these ancients, did not so much deny the same, but not knowing the Scripture they could not know how it should be: thence Epicurus and others of his followers finding that they could not salve the *Problema* of nature and shun unanswerable absurdities if they admitted an eternity of the world, did fall on such an irrational fancy, to avoide this, of the fortuitous concurrence of atoms, yea some held an eternal praxistence of the first matter, which pitiful notions may shew what sad case men are in, who groap after the truth by the twilight of nature, and are strangers to the Scripture: but I leave this, and shall only touch a little some most clear and satisfying evidences of this truth that the beginning and original of the world is not more clear from the Scripture, then it is also demonstrable from solide convincing grounds of reason; and truly a clear discovery of this hath a further reach: then may be apprehended, to give the Atheisme of men a dead stroke, and shake all its grounds: now let these few things be seriously considered. 1. If you confesse there is a Deity, that God blessed for ever is, must you not necessarily admit a creation and beginning, since eternity is a thing that is only communicable to the first cause, and you cannot conceive that the earth could produce it self, for to exist and not to exist at the same time is a contradiction; and I

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am sure they must shut their eyes who do not every where discern some witness of the glorious being of God. 2. You cannot deny that there is such a thing as time, since there is no judging of days, years and ages to be infinite, or how one thing in a continued order should go before another without coming to some first and beginning. 3. Do's not this gradual advance of humane knowledge in the earth, and that further discovery which arts and sciences have made by a continued improvment of the same witness very clearly a beginning and original of the world, for ye could not conceive a perpetual succession of mankind with a constant essay after further knowledge, with such a continued progress in experience, as an eternity supposed before this would produce, and yet the most concerning arts and sciences, yea, the choicest experiments and inventions we have in the world to be of so late a rise and date, such as the use of printing, and of the Mariners compass by the load stone, the use of guns, the improvment of mineralls in Medicine; yea the very motion and convoy of the blood in mans body which are but of late discovery. 4. May not so short a history which to this day we have of the world, witness its late Original, and that it is of no eternal duration, since the ancientest records of time, or of things past do not exceed some thousands of years; and could this be possibly conceived, that infinite ages preceeding, if such had been, should give no account nor leave a remembrance to posterity, when these late ages holds so much forth; yea, how could it be that it is but of late one part of the world is known and discovered to another part thereof? 5. It is very manifest from the known records we have of by past times, what hath been the rise and encrease of nations, yea, how a great part of men have from a rude and savage estate been brought into Society, and under laws and government, which shews this world must be of a short duration, which none could conceive by admitting such a suposal of its eternal being. 6. It is sure man is born and dies, and in that ordinary way of generation mankind is still propagat; and is not here the

worlds beginning very obvious? For you cannot judge that men should beget other eternally without going back at last to some first man, who could not beget himself. 7. If eternity be preferable to time, can you judge the excellent things of the earth, such as man, and next unto him the beasts, are perishing, and only these things which are immortal and the mass of the earth whereon they tread is of perpetual duration. 8. It is manifest what an increase a few men (not to speak of other living creatures) may in an ordinary way have, to people a vast country even in some ages, now is it not thus clear the world can be of no eternal duration, for if you should this way, turn back on an infinite number of ages, and suppose that every age should be added and multiply to the race of man two or three, it would come at last to this, the earth could not bear them; since we must thus oppose some infinite increase from an infinite continuance of the world, which no wars or consuming strokes could in such a measure diminish. 9. Can you conceive that should be eternal which is wholly made up of corruptible and perishing things; since the things of the world have all their set times, and seasons wherein they appear, and are quickly gone: in a word must not these deny a dissolution of this world or an after judgment and life to come, yea the whole truth of religion, if this great truth be not received and believed.

But having premitted some few evidences that may witness the original of the world, yea that this marvellous frame with the whole continued course of nature is the product of a divine power and wisdom, I shall here in the second place point at some few things, which may shew how great a pledge this is, and what a quieting ground it should be to the faith of the godly, that the Scripture is certainly true, and must have an accomplishment, since from the very being and beginning of the world, we may clearly reason to these which by undeniable consequence followes.

I. That the world now is, is a sure and confirming witness to its last close, and of the accomplishment of that promise

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promise of its dissolution in the end of time, we know it is not long since there was no earth, no sun, moon or stars, now upon no less security then that word, by which it was formed we must believe it shall ere long cease to be, what now it is, and thus when we look upon the world, and see such a thing before us, ought we not to read that promise of its after dissolution clearly written thereon before our eyes? 2. It is a very clear consequence; that this God can bring his word unto performance, and his power therein cannot fail or fall short, yea that his counsel and purpose hath no dependence on means or instruments who did once bring this world out of nothing, and said let there be heaven and an earth when there was none: O when we open the bible and read the great promises thereof, should we not have that impression on our souls, these are the true and faithful sayings of God, and his word with whom the doing thereof is as easie as to say it; who without the concurrence of instruments, or any coworkers could bring this great creation forth; we truly so far mistake the meaning of the heavens, and these great celestial bodies, with the marvellous order that is there, when we cannot read the truth and faithfulness of God in all his promises write there upon, for they are held forth to men as a confirming pledge of the same, and this were indeed an excellent study and improvement of Astrology. 3. Since it is sure and undeniable that this earth doth hang in the emptie place, though men see not whereon it leans and rests: O what a strange thing is it! Could the air bear up so vast and ponderous a body, but herein is a marvellous divine power convincingly witnessed, which hath so established it that it cannot be moved; Now is not this his very word that bears up such a weight, and thence with as clear ground we may reason, for adventuring of the Church with its weight, and every Christians burden, whatever it may be, on the promise of this God, on whose word the great bulk of the earth doth this day lean: I must say no mathematical demonstration do's follow, by a clearer evidence, then this consequence from such premisses is undenyable. 4. We see the Lord keeps

keeps covenant with the day and the night, yea that summer and winter do's not fail before him according to his promise, and are not these a visible witness for God that his truth and Covenant with his Church shall not faile, for it is sure the continued course of nature hath such an audible voice if we could but listen thereto. 5. Do's not the Lord clearly witness by such a strange contrariety that is amongst the elements, and these different qualities whereof he serves himself in this great frame, and composure of the world, that this promise shall not fail, but it is easie for him to verify the same, in making all things work together, were they never so cross and disagreeing among themselves, for an accomplishment of his designe. 6. When we see the rage and violence of the great Ocean bounded by a bank of sand, for which there could be no true reason given, how such an impetuous and furious motion could be restrain'd, and the sand be a bridle to the sea, if it were not to make out the faithfulness of God, who by a perpetual decree hath thus bounded it; O is there not thence a visible confirmation of his truth! that he can also restrain the rage of men, and turn it unto his praise, and for attaining this end serve him self of most improbable midles; it was a notable saying of a grave Minister of Christ, when he was upon the sea in a storme, O shall I fear, says he, the face of a tyrant, that serve him who can restrain and tame the rage of this swelling sea. 7. If we consider the earth and its original, and look aright on that so oft repeated discovery we have of the seed time and harvest, and of the earth bringing forth such innumerable kindes of vegetables in the spring after a dead winter, as out of their graves, may we not thence have a very clear confirming seal of that great truth of the resurrection, and of the raising of the dust of mens bodies that is buried under the earth; I shall but say, does not God thus give a continued wonder, and set the same before our eyes in the continued course of nature, to assure us of his truth and promise, that it shall not fail though there were no appearance how in an ordinary way it could be accomplished. (¶)

II. Ground whence we may be thus confirmed in our faith is this; that not onely the most part of the Scripture is already proved, and verified in the event, but also, *These truths which of the whole Scripture are most strange, and marvellous, yea, should have much staggered our faith if they were yet still in a promise are this day certainly accomplished, I shall but only instance the coming of the Messias, which the Prophets of old foretold, that God should be manifest in the flesh, and a virgin bring forth a son, whose name should be Emmanuel, that was to dye, and be cut off out of the land of the living, not for himself but for the transgression of his People, is not this now surely accomplished? Which we may say is the greatest wonder, the most astonishing thing that ever was, or shall be, and should fully silence our thoughts anent any other Scripture truth, that is yet to be made out, for we know that the great buisness of redemption is put to a close, the ranfome and price thereof fully told down, now is the doctrine of the Gospel sealed, and attested by blood even the blood of the Testator, it is now sure the promised Messias hath come, and this is he, who in the dayes of Pilat suffered at Jerusalem, in whom all things which were written by the Prophets, were truly accomplished. And is not this a great pledge, to assure us of the real outmaking of every other promise? It is sure he did dye, his blessed side was pierced with a spear, and upon the crosse he cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost. O Here lyeth the greatest cause of wonder, not what doth yet remain of the Scripture, but that which is already fulfilled, not that Christ should come again to judge the World, but that once he did come to the World, and become man; for God to be found in the form of a servant and dye, that is beyond expression wonderful, for the other must necessarily as a consequent follow, that he who hath redeemed the Church, and did pay her ranfome should see the travel of his soul, and be satisfied, that having made such a purchase he should also have possession and finish the building, the foundation whereof was his own blood. I confesse what we do yet expect according to the promise,*

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are great, and astonishing truths, the full overthrow of Antichrist, and his Kingdome, that the dead bones of the Jewish Church should again live, but specially Christs return to judgment, who shall be revealed from heaven with flaming fire, the sound of the trumpet, and voice of the Archangel, yet, how great soever they are and may seem hard for us to believe, O how small comparatively are they, with that which is already done and accomplished, the Incarnation of the Son of God, a mystery hid from ages, wherein the Angels with wonder doe look, which we may say, is unspeakably more great, then to creat this World, and turn it again to nothing; it may be truely strange, whilst we read these prophecies anent Christ, and his Kingdome, in so plain an history, and professe that we believe he did dye, and rise again, we should have such hesitation, anent the performance of any other Scripture promise; is it not this day much more easy, to believe the Scripture and fulfilling thereof, then it was of old for the Jewish Church before Christs coming? And now may we not with as much assurance wait for the second coming of the Lord, and a full perfecting of his word even from that which is already verified thereof, as we are sure of the return of the sun after it is gone down, and of the breaking of the day when once the night is past.

III. Ground whence the godly in these times should be confirmed anent the full performance of that which is yet remaining of the Scripture, that it is sure, yea now near at hand, is this, that *Jesus Christ is come to action against the enemies of his Church, and hath taken the fields, that surely he is now gone forth in the greatnes of his strength conquering, and to conquer.*

This is a grave truth which might give us very sweet refreshing thoughts in so shaking a time, that whilst we have seen the Lords appearing by a great, and outstretched hand for his people, these terrible stirs, and concussions of the nations, have seen him strike through Kings in the day of wrath, and fill the places with the dead bodies of his adver-

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aries, we may also on clear Scripture grounds conclude, that the Lords is now awaked as a mighty man, and upon the fields, yea, that the war is surely begun against Antichrist, and all the adversaries of his Church, which shall not cease until the full victory be obtained; for indeed these providences which in these last times, should be very affrighting, and terrible, when we go in to the word, we shall find they have a comfortable aspect on the Church, and do preface her greater enlargement, which as the tender buds, and leaves of the fig tree, are put forth to shew the sommers approach, *Lue. 21. ver. 28.* It is true the Church is now low, and the work of God meets with very sad interruptions which are needful, both for trial, and rebuke, but this also is sure which none can deny, that the Lord hath eminently appeared, and done great things for his Church yea, we must say, he hath, by a confluence of very remarkable providences thus condescended to strengthen his peoples hands, to confirm such who are ready to stagger, even as it were by crutches, anent the greatnes of these things which are yet promised.

Now to clear this truth a little we would consider, First; How it is very consonant to the Scripture and expressly held forth in the same, that in the last times, and turn of the Churches case from Antichrist, the Lord will thus appear, in his great strength, and set up his standard against his adversaries, yea, will then in a special way call forth his people, to glorify him by an active testimony. 2. That Lord hath thus begun to appear according to his word is a truth that is also undeniable, and should much help to confirm our faith, anent the performance of that which further remains of the Scripture.

1. That this is manifest from the word may be thus clear- First, Though the Church militant must not want an adversary and some persecution from the World, even in her best estate, yet, we have a safe warrant to expect that the Lord will glorify himselfe in a peculiar way in his people now in these latter dayes, by doing, and acting for the

the truth, as in former ages his glory did most appear; during Antichrists Reign, in his Churches suffering; for then the faith, and patience of his Saints was to be witnessed in its season, *Rev. 13. ver. 10.* And thus he would serve himself of his people, and bring forth his glory, until that time of retribution, when these who had killed with the sword, should be killed by the sword, and these who led unto captivity, be so dealt with, which doth also clearly promise some special outletting of the Spirit for acting with these gifts of courage, and resolution suitable to the service of the Church in the latter dayes; and truly I think it is a great want we study not more the accomplishing of the promises, and how to improve the same for gifts, as well as grace in order to the several times, and necessities of the Church.

2. It is very clear from the Scripture that in the last dayes, when Christ is to raise his Church from under the power, and tyranny of Antichrist he shall then appear in a warlike posture, which John had shewed to him, *Rev. 19. ver. 13. 14.* as one upon the head of his forces, with his vesture dipped in blood, to shew that when once the war is begun against his adversary, and this Lion of the tribe of Judah begins to rouse himself up, what a terrible appearance he will have in that undertaking; and it is clear, that the Lord hath declared in this his counsel, and will, that his Son Christ should in the latter times, take unto himself his great power and reign, *Rev. 11. ver. 17.* yea, cause the World know him to be Head of principalities, and powers, as well as of the Church, for his glory in this truth as a King, which former ages seemed in so great a measure to darken, must then clearly shine forth. I truly think men appearing with such violence, and rage against so concerning a truth, now in these dayes doth promise some eminent appearance of the Lord therein, and that he shall yet more solemnly assert the same before the World.

3. Doth not the Scripture point at the last times, as that special time of recompence for the controversy of Sion to which the Lord hath reserved a solemn triumph of his justice;

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justice, over all his Churches enemies, when he shall enquire for the blood of his Saints, shed upon the earth since the dayes of Abel, at Babylons hand, *Revelat. 18. ver. 24.* that great adversary, who stands in law-guiltie; and hath served her self heire to all the violence and cruelty done in former ages, for in her hand must that cup be found full, which the enemies of the Church from the beginning have been filling up, and as so many rivers, and fountaines hath run unto this great sea.

4. It is also clear that in the last times, when the Lord shall bind up the breach of his people, and heal the stroke of their wound, who, for so long a time, had been trampled under by Antichrist, he shall by some signal providences roll away this reproach, and scandal of meanes, contempt, and persecution, shall put some glory on his Church proportionable to its former abatement, yea, thus comfort her, according to the dayes, wherein he had afflicted her, and cause his peoples uprising, in measure, and kinde to answer their low and suffering state from Antichrist, even in the last times, when the Lord shall make them appear with the face of a Lion, when the feeble shall be as David, and as the Angel of the Lord, *Zach. 12. ver. 8.* which promise doth clearly point at the Churches raising and delivery from Antichrist; upon the back whereof we finde the Prophet doth foretell the last conversion, and incoming of Israel.

5. I shall only adde what the Scripture doth most expressly shew, that the Lord shall so gloriously appear in bringing his Church out of Babylon, and executing his judgment on that adversary, as in the day when he brought his people out of Egypt, and therefore shall they sing the song of Moses, and the lamb, *Rev. 15. ver. 3.* his great power, and outstretched hand; being no lesse discernable therein, then if they had been standing with Israel at the red Sea, when they saw their enemies lying dead upon the shore; yea, have we not ground to believe, that the Lord shall make himself very evidently known in raising instruments, and acting them forth, which hath been

already seen, and I am sure the World must confesse what great things have been done by these of whom little was expected.

2. That the Lord hath thus begun to appear, and make himself known to the World in these last ages according to his word is a thing very easy to demonstrat, for.

1. Is it not clear how in these last times, he hath met his enemies upon their high places, and in their greatest strength, that by a strong hand he did make room for his truth, when both Law, and force did withstand the same, and put the marks of his wrath on such who would oppose the spreading of his Kingdome, that they have been as visible, as sometimes their rage, and violence against the Church was; yea, since the Lord begun to lift up a standard for the truth, and call forth his People to act, hath not been seen they have losed their ground more by underhand treaties, and turning aside to carnal politick shifts then by open force, and violence, which the French Massacre, with other sad instances can witnes; for indeed the Church hath still lost least, by greatest opposition.

2. Have we not seen by what dreadful shakings, and alterations of the earth, this late glorious reformation of the Church from Antichristianisme hath been ushered in, which hath been more strange, and frequent, then in many ages before; hath not the Lord caused the Nations shake, and the earth to reel like a drunken man, to shew men that though he suffered long in former times of the Worlds ignorance he will not so now bear with opposing his truth.

3. Have we not also seen the Lords raising up men fitter action, in these last times, men of a great heroick spirit, with some more then ordinary elevation of the same, to appear for his intrest, such we may say that many former ages could not instance, in which the Lords helping his People to do great things, his suicing them with endowments for the service, and work of the time, hath been most discernable? Was not that excellent man the Admiral of France, with many others in that place, eminently raised

raised up, for the necessity of that time, and doe we not finde these Princes of Orange, William, and Maurice, and Mauricius of Saxony, whom the Lord raised against Charles the V. and caused him flee over the Alpes, yea, what marvellous resolution, and courage did attend the actings of the confederates of the Low Countreys, and in latter times doe we not finde Gustavus King of Sweden, Bernard Duke of Weymar, Lantsgrave of Hesse, with many others eminently raised to avenge the Lords quarrel against that bloody house of Austria; have we not also seen very great instruments raised up in Brittain, and Ireland, (who were followed with wonderful successe,) to act for the truth against Antichristian Prelacy; and truely we must say the withdrawing in such a measure of that spirit of courage, and resolution, which once was so visibly let forth in the first dawning of the Reformation, may sadly point at a great decay of zeal, self-confidence, unfaithfulness as to the improving of opportunities; for the Lord was with his People whilest they were with him, and did singly follow him in his way, but alace, with their departing, it may be said their strength hath departed from them, however, the quarrel is clear for an oppressed Peoples acting, upon so just, so necessary an account as the interest of Religion against the cruelty and violent encroachments of Antichrist, wherein as the Lord hath eminently owned his People, so, I dare not question he will yet appear, and silence the adversaries of this truth, by such an argument, against which they shall not debate.

4. That universal deluge of blood which for the 100 yeares past hath overflowed much of Europe can be a witness to this, that the Lord hath taken peace from men who would not embrace the peace of the Gospel offered in these last times, and given his enemies who had shed the blood of the saints, blood to drink in great measure. I am sure poor Germany can prove this, which for 20 yeares together was a field of dead men; and France from the dayes of Henry the II. to the establishment of Henry the IV. how long was the Low Countreys made a stage of war, where

many a cruell Spaniard did fall under the sword of an avenging God, besides the late bloody warres in Brittain, and Ireland, and what doth this declare, but that Jesus Christ hath taken the fields, and it will not be now with the Kings of the earth, to oppresse his Church, and withstand the truth as in former times.

I shall but adde, how wonderfully hath the Lord appeared in delivering his Church at the greatest extremity, hath turned his enemies counsels and designs upon themselves, brought about the great works of these last times by meanes so unexpected, and improbable, that we may say, as to what of his judgement is already execute against Antichrist, hath been no lesse marvellous then that Jerichoes wals should fall at the sound of a trumpet of ramhorn; or a cake of barley bread tumbling into the host of Midian should smite, and overthrow the same; surely when we consider, what the Lord hath done, and how exactly that doth answer the Scripture we may have much to confirm us, anent the further accomplishment of his word, and be assured that the term of his long suffering towards Babylon is at an end, war is denounced, and the execution already begun, which must not have a close untill judgment be accomplished into victory.

IV. Ground which may confirm the faith of the saints and be as a pledge in their hand of the full accomplishing of the Scripture, yea, that this is near, is this, *that the day is now turned and that prophesied victory which the Church should have over Antichrist before the end, is not only begun, but in a great measure advanced.*

This is indeed a great confirmation when we see so marvellous a crisis in the Churches case, her recovery from so desperat, and hopelesse a disease already begun, that it shall be further perfected; we are made to wonder at the greatnes of these things yet promised, but why should we not also wonder at that which God hath already done for his Church, in our dayes; the Scripture doth shew that Antichrists ruine must begin by the word, that this stroke shall

be gradual, and however that great work of God meet with much opposition, yet, it shall no more go back in the whole, and must we not say in all this the word is fulfilled, it hath not hitherto failed the Church, but the event in every circumstance made to answer to the same.

Now to clear this we would consider these two. First, that the Churches victory over Antichrist is this day so far advanced. 2. How the Lords very immediat hand hath been most discernable therein.

1. The first I need but name whilst it is so manifest, what the Lord hath wrought for his Church, for we have seen Kingdomes, and Nations, subject themselves to the truth, the kingdome of Antichrist grow dark, with the breaking up of the light, and many of his followers made to gnash their teeth, being scorched with the heat and power of the gospel; in how great a measure is that interest now shaken, if we consider, what the Lord hath wrought, what a great reformation hath been in Brittain and Ireland, through much of France, Germany, Sweden, the Low Countries, Pole, Denemark, yea, even in Hungary and Transilvania, sure this was a great work, which should be marvellous in our eyes, how that Antichristian Empire contrived with such wisdom, underpropt with so great strength, whose commands not long since were received as Oracles, with an awe, and respect onely due to God, hath in such a measure begun to fall before the power of the word. O the righteous judgment of the Lord, which he hath shewed forth upon that adversary, and should be a pledge to us of the further manifestation thereof, an adversary we may say the greatest that ever the Church had, whose little finger hath been sorer then the loins of all who went before, if we consider his cruelty over mens bodies, tyrannie over their conscience, with so long a continuance of that trial; in respect of whom it may be said Pharaoh was an easy taskmaster, Antiochus, and the Roman Emperours milde, who for neer 1200 year did carry on a desperate, and bloody war against the Church.

II. The second which I would at some more length follow forth is this, *how the Lords hand and something of an extraordinary providence hath been no lesse discernable in this late raising of the Church, and her begun victory over Antichrist then in the First planting of Christianity by the Apostles*, this is a truth which to many may seem strange, but when seriously considered, if prejudice do not darken mens judgment, will appear from sure and solid grounds; now to demonstrate this I would here offer some very convincing witnesses, which may help to strengthen the faith of the Godly, and give Atheisme some dash.

FIRST Witnes to this truth is *that wonderful success which the Gospel in these last times hath had*, wherein men must see the great power of God, and efficacy of the Spirit, in some measure as manifest, as in the first rise of the Christian Church, if we consider.

1. From what a small spark, so great a fire did break up which in a short time put Europe in a flame, and made so great a change therein, even Luthers appearing against Texelius upon the account of his indulgencies, O but Gods time of working may be oft contraire to our time of expecting.

2. What a swift progresse did the gospel have? may we not say with wonder can a nation be born at once, yet, this we have seen how many Nations and Cities in one and the same age, yea, in lesse then 40 yeares, was brought in subjection to the truth, and these instruments whom scarce any durst own at first, made to see great Princes with armies on the fields for the interests of Christ.

3. Have we not seen Religion propagated by martyr dome, no lesse then in the primitive times, and mens essaies to ruin the Church helped it further to grow. O what but a divine power could thus bring gold out of iron, and clay, bring a flouishing Church out of their ashes, and turn her poison to a preservative, but alace it is sad that whilest men were burned for the truth, and reading the Scripture, their affection did also burn in reading the
same,

same, but now with our liberty there is so great a decay.

4. Must not the wise, and politicians of the World confesse this late encrease of the Church is a thing above their reach, most crosse to all their rules, which they cannot see how in an ordinary way it could be brought about.

5. Were not instruments most unlikely for so great a work if we would judg as men, that such a poor handful, as *Luther*, *Zuinglius*, *Melanchton*, *Bucere*, &c. should go forth to confront that power which then made the earth to tremble, might it not seem as improbable as the sending forth of some fisher men to subdue the Nations?

6. It is known they were none of the Rabbies of the time, whose repute and fame might have purchased easy access to their message, nay they were loaded with all the reproach which their adversaries could devise, with novelty of doctrine, deceit and falshood in their dealing, represented to the World as Monsters, *Luther* was forced to answer himself a printed relation of his death, how he was carried away soul and body by the Devil.

7. Was not the message they carried most opposit to mens carnal inclinations, to these principles they had suckt in from their infancy, to the religion of their Fathers, yea, in a word, had no outward encouragements, the whole World seemed to combine against them; *Luther*, at his first appearance excommunicated by the Pope, proscribed by the Emperour, and good *Melanchton* was oft made to faint, when he thought on so great a spear of opposition, so that without the convoy of an extraordinary power, nothing could have looked more improbable.

SECOND Witnes that may let the World see a wonderful providence in this late raising of the Church is this, these sharp assaults which the Church met with from a party, no lesse cruel, and powerful then any adversary which the Church had in the primitive times, for I am sure the World must confesse that no ordinary mean had wanted for an essay to crush the gospel in its first budding forth, that both counsel, and force, the authority of law, backed with greatest rage

and violence in its execution, yea, the power of this Princes of the earth was put forth to the utmost, to withstand this great work of God in these last ages; to clear this I shall only point at some remarkable assaults which did tryft the dauning of the gospel that may shew something above nature going alongst with it.

1. We find a Spanish Emperour devoted to the Popish interest, more powerful then any who went before, brought in on Germany with the very first breaking up of the light, which might seem a dreadful let to the Gospels spreading.

2. The rise of the Boores, and Anabaptist party, whose being so grosse, destructive to civil order, to the interests, and proprieties of men, did look like a sad tryft, and a probable mean to beget much prejudice against the truth.

3. That sad overthrow of the Duke of Saxony, and Landgrave of Hesse, who were such great patriots to the Church, did then threaten the very ruin of the Protestant interest in Germany.

4. The Council of Trent where the Popish party had all their politicks on foot in a strong combination, how to ruin the Church.

5. The Interim of Germany a most subtile contrivance to divide, and thus break the strength of the Protestants, was also a sore assault, a snare to some, and cause of persecution to others.

6. That Spanish Inquisition established through Spain, Italy, and the Low Countreyes, a horrid cruel engine which did reach to prevent the smallest glancings of the truth.

7. The French Massacre where not only the Admiral, but most of the considerable Protestants were through all France in a few dayes cut off, O would not this seem an irrecoverable stroke, together with that Catholick league, which did quickly follow upon the back thereof, a very strong and formidable combination to root out the Protestant interest.

8. The taking away of Edward the sixth of England, and

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and establishing of a cruel persecuter Queen Mary did indeed look like a stroke that should root out the Church in that part, and destroy that famous plantation of the Gospel, in its tender growth.

9. I must adde that which was as fore an assault to the Church as any, so grievous a difference which with the first breaking up of the work of Reformation did begin betwixt Luther, and Zwinglius about Christs presence in the Sacrament, yea, came to such an height, and with so great heat, and animosity was followed, as in appearance would have wholly frustrat the work they were about.

THIRD Witnes to this truth is *that wonderful patience, and resolution of the Saints, yea, with much chearfulness in their greatest sufferings, which in these late times did appear,* Wherein the world must confesse that same immediat support from Heaven, yea, the Lords owning his Pople in a very extraordinary way, was no lesse manifest, then in these primitive sufferings of the Church from heathens. Sure no bypast times, even in these bloody dayes of Nero, Domitian, &c. can shew more horrid, more strange engines of torment, and cruelty then what in these last ages the Church did endure from the Popish party, whose savage, and barbarous usage of the poor flock of Christ, where ever they had access, may witnes a cruelty more then humane, and as to the number, are they not almost without reckoning, who in France, Germany, Brittain, and the Low Countries, beside other parts, were slain within this 150. yeares, for the word of God, and the testimony of his truth. Now as this is most manifest it is also known what a divine, and an invincible spirit with an astonishing courage, and resolution, did appear in the carriage of the People of God, under this sore persecution, how they triumphed over their oppressours, and did chearfully meet death in its most terrible shape; a thing which the Schooles of Socrates, and Plato, with all their rules could never reach, yea, should be reckoned, amongst

the miracles of these latter dayes; anent which we would consider these things.

1. That something more then nature, a spirit, and resolution above the ordinary rate of men, yea, something much above themselves, their natural temper, and disposition did in their most extream sufferings oft appear, and this without the least shadow of affectation, and deceit: I am sure the World in these last ages, yea, the conscience of their persecutors, and of the greatest Atheists must witnes this.

2. That many of the most soft, tender disposition, many women whose complexion would declare more weaknes then others yet in this late Antichristian persecution, did endure greatest torments, and by suffering triumphed over the fury, and rage of their adversaries, whereof we have many instances upon record.

3. The World hath been also witnes how serious, and deliberat the Saints were in this, that they made suffering their choise, which they could easily have shunned, at the rate of yeelding something in the truth, but ere they would doe this, or give the adversary such a bribe, they choised to embrace death, and goe to a stake for Christ, even when they wanted not most perswading offers to turn them aside: for instance I would here mention that excellent man in Queen Maryes time Julius Palmer who not only had life, but preferment offered if he would recant, to which his answer was, that he had quit his living in two places for Christ, and now was ready to yeeld his life also on that accompt: likewise one William Hunter, whom Bishop Bonar did urge with many offers to recant, told him it must be Scripture, and not perswasions of that kinde, for he reckoned all earthly things but dross, and dung in respect of Christ, and at the stake when a pardon by the Sheriffe was offered upon such an accompt, did peremptorly reject the same. Antonius Riceto a Venetian who condemned for the truth had a large offer to have his patrimony restored, which was much mortgaged with debt, and make free, besides his life, if he

would

would but a little yeeld, and likewise had his son weeping
him for that cause, gave this answer he was resolved to
lose both Children, and estate for Christ. I shall adde
what we have related of one Herwin, who suffered in the
low countryes, to whom the Magistrates made great in-
creasies with large promises to recant, which he wholly
sighted, many more instances of this kinde here might be
set down.

4. It is known, that such who were of great repute in
the World, and had a large share of outward things to
tempt them, did in these last times most chearfully part
with the same, and choise rather suffering for the truth:
we may instance these two great witnesses John Frederick
of Saxon, and the Landtgrave of Hesse, who under that
long imprisonment by Charels the 5. bare out many sharp
assaults both by threatnings and offers, without yeelding
in the least to the prejudice of the truth, yea on this ac-
count did the Duke of Saxon forgoe with his estate, and
dignity. *Anna Du Burg* counsellour of the Parliament at
Paris of great parts, and repute, who before Henry the
II. had an excellent speech in Parliament, for the Pro-
testant party, for which by him being imprisoned, did
forgoe all his honours, and interests in the World, which
which otherwayes he might have brooked, and embraced
death for Christ. The Prince of Condee at the massacre of
Paris, when the King expressly shewed him he should
within 3 dayes dye, if he did not renounce his Religion,
told him, his estate, and life were in his hand, but ere he
renounced the truth he would quite both. Charles de
Zeroton a Moravian Barron of great interest and authority
in that country in the late Bohemian persecution did
quite all his estate, and possession for the Gospel, not with-
standing of many large offers, and perswasions. We finde
also in Engeland the Dutches of Suffolk, a lady who lived
in the fulnes of the world, and pleasures thereof, yet in
Queen Maries time, did quite both estate, and country
for the truth, and on that accompt did choise a very hard
lot in other parts.

5. Is it not also known how these who had been ready to faint, and be overcharged with discouragement, yet sought a new death in the extremity of their suffering, did shew a marvellous resolution, and chearfulness, a thing which an Atheist can possibly answer, and sheweth Gods very mediatic support. Mr Glover how sore was he cast down, and could feel no joy, or comfort after much wrestling, but no sooner did come in sight of the stake, but his heart was filled with the joy of the Lord, and with his strength which forced him to clap his hands, and cry forth to his friend who knew his former damp, and discouragement, *Oh Austine he is come, he is come*, and thus chearfully went to death. Thomas Hudson a choise Christian who suffered in Queen Maryes time, when at the stake, did slip suddenly from under the chain, to the astonishment of the People, but not from fear of death, but from the want of feeling the stake of Christ, which made him full of heaviness, but after turning aside, that he had got his soul poured out to God, he returned as one raised from death to life, crying out, *Now I am strong, and do not care what man can do to me*, and thus with much joy, did yeeld up his spirit. Likewise *Annas du Burgh* whom we before mentioned being thrown into fear, and discouragement drawn to recant, had no more in his spirit, until he retracted the same, and after a fiercheerfully undergoe death; with what marvellous resolution did that excellent man Doctor Cranmer put his right hand to the fire when he came to the stake, and suffered to burn without shrinkiug, which as he said he would not do, for subscribing a recantation which was so much to him after his grief.

Last I must adde, that marvellous joy, and resolution which the Saints in these late times, did in their greatest sufferings shew, is very notable, and known to the world, for their suffering was not in a corner, and we may say, hath not come short of the primitive Martyrs, but did witnes the same spirit, and power accompanying them. I cannot passe this in a general without giving some touch, amidst such a multitude of convincing instances;

Let us hear blessed Bradfoord at the stake, thus speak to his fellow sufferer, be of good comfort, for we shall have this merriment, yet a merry supper with the Lord. Latimer to Ridley we shall shew a merry day li, but such a candle in England, as I trust shall never be put out. Mr Sanders, I was in prison until I got into prison; Gods very word at the stake embracing cries welcome the crosse of the cast down Christ, welcome everlasting life. Doctor Farrer to a gentle which wrestling man who bemoaned his death, and the painfulnes of it if you, but his faith me once stir in the fire, beleve not my doctrine, as did his strength after appear, for he stood without moving in the midst cry forth from the flame. John Ardley, if every hair of my head were courage me, it should suffer death in the faith I now stand in, fearfully we Elizabeth Folks embracing the stake cryed fare well World, who suffered farewell faith, and hope, and welcome love. Robert Aguires slip suddenly when at Lile in the Low countries he suffered with his of the People rather for the truth, in the year 1556. did cry forth at the stake, behold millions of Angels about us, and the heaven but after he seemed to receive us after he had sometime fixed his eyes on poured out heaven, and when the fire was kindled, sayes to his life, cry whether yet a very little, and we shall enter into the heavenly man can be in prison. Mr. Tims an English minister in Queen Maryes rit. Likewise sayes thus writs to his friends, I am going to the Bis- being through the colehouse but shall not be long there before I be car- had not led up to my brethren, who are gone to heaven before me and after me a fiery chariot; follow you after me, where you shall tellous rejoice and mee singing merrily at my journeyes end, holy, holy, put his name only, Lord God of Sabaoth. Algerius an Italian martyr thus d suffered writs from his prison a little before his death, Who would e would believe that in this dungeon I should finde a paradise so pleasant, much there a place of sorrow and death, tranquillity, and hope of e, where others weep I rejoyce. O how easy and sweet is his and resolute, and this he subscribs from that delectable orchard of did in the Leoline prison. Guy de Bres the ringing of my chain hath d known when sweet musick in my eares, all my former discourses were corner, and as a blind mans of colours, in respect of my present feeling. ive Martyr what a precious comforter is a good conscience. The Lord Hen- companying Otto a Bohemian, who suffered in the late persecution, giving some said

said to the minister, I was troubled, but now I feel a wonderful refreshment. O now I fear death no longer, I dye with joy, and on the scaffold cryed out, behold I see the heavens opened, pointing with his hands at the place where others observed a certain brightness that did dazel their eyes, and thus dyed with great chearfulness. I shall but adde the last words of that holy, and great Mr. Wishart, who thus spake amidst the fire, *this flame doth, torment my body, but no whit abate my spirits.*

FOURTH. Witness is these great, and remarkable judgments of God, which in these last times have befallen the adversaries, and persecutors of the Church, who have been most notable for their opposition to the truth; wherein we must say a divine hand hath been so discernable that ordinary observers could not passe the same without a remark, but must acknowledge the righteous judgment of God, that it cometh not by chance, and at an adventure, but doth convincingly seal the word.

This is indeed a grave subject wherein we should be serious, and sober, for the judgments of God are a great depth, nor can we determine from events but in so far as they answer to the word; it may sometime happen to wicked men according to the work of the righteous, but on the other hand it is a sure truth that God is known by the judgment he executeth, and in every age doth point out sin to the World by remarkable strokes, some great examples of judgment, which as a beacon are set forth for men to observe, and truly we may say these remarkable instances of the judgment of God, since he begun to found a retreat to his Church from Babylon are far beyond other preceeding ages, I would be sparing to repeat what of this kinde is published by others, but that in speaking to this truth, I cannot passe it in a general, whilest there are so many instances wherein the Lord hath made himself known, and these such a convincing seal, and confirmation of the truth, and the following relations, I dare with confidence say there is not any parallel, or matter of fact, here set down without some clear, and

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satisfying grounds as to the certainty thereof.
I shall first instance Charles the V. whose undertakings for many years were followed with successe, until once he set himselfe to persecute and oppresse the Church, and bathed his sword in the blood of the Protestants, with his cruel, and unjust usage of the Duke of Saxony, from which time, his affaires begun visibly to decline, he is forced to fly before Mauritius, and seek a retreat in the furthest confines of the empire, and after broken with melancholy, and discontent, like another Dioclesian, doth resign his empire, and turn to a privat life.

Philip the II. of Spain, one of the greatest persecutors of the Church in these last ages, whose work was to root out the Protestant religion in his dominions, and therefore set on foot that horrid engine of the Inquisition, yet, at last finds all his essayes frustrat, and after the losse of many millions of treasures; and of some 10000 lives by war, yes; of a considerable part of the Netherlands, and after the breaking his great Armado at sea against the English by a very remarkable stroke from Heaven, is at last smitten of the Lord in his body by a strange disease, or rather a confluence of diseases, which his phisicians could neither understand, nor cure, his body falling out in grievous boils, whence (besids putride matter) there did issue such abundance of Vermin that bystanders could hardly cleanse, and endure the horrid smel thereof, that so he who had put so many of the Saints to cruel torments by the Inquisition, was himselfe tormented, for two years together with unexpressible pain and anguish.

Henry the II. of France a most violent enemy to the Church, whilst he had caused sentence *Annas de Burgh* to death; having solemnly protested in such words, *these eyes of mine shall see thee burnt*; a little before the appointed time of his execution, running in the lists with a spear against Count Montgomery, is pierced through the eye, with such a wound, that in a short time sent him to his grave, and frustrat his expectation of seeing the death of that

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satisfying

persecutor, I shall mention elsewhere how remarkably the judgment of God did pursue him.

Henry the III, who (whilst he was Duke of Anjou) did assist at that horrid Council kept at St. Cloud, near Paris where the Massacre was concluded is some years after stobbed to death by a Jacobin frier in that very chamber, a thing which Du Serres doth twice mention with a remark, as a marvellous instance of the judgment of God.

The Duke of Guise, the great executioner of that Massacre, with his brother the Cardinal, a special contriver of the same, are not long after killed by Henry the III, at Blois, with whom they had oft joyned in Council, to root out the Protestants, and which is very observable, by a specious show of friendship were circumvented, and with solemn Oaths, and promises as treacherously reached as the Admiral, and Protestants by Charles the IX. were at Paris, and these 2 who were his great Counsellors, thus are dealt with, having blood measured out to them for blood, and treachery as they had dealt treacherously with the Saints.

We find also the Duke of Aumale who was a joynt actor with the Duke of Guise in that massacre doth a little after fall by a shot off the walls at the siege of Rochel, which not only Du Serres, but also Davilla, who was very popish doth particularly relate, where we may see, what a bloody end the great contrivers, and actors of that horrid massacre had.

Henry the IV. a Prince of excellent parts and great natural accomplishments, was followed with marvellous success, whilst he owned the truth, yet, after many victories, and the breaking of the Catholick League, turns popish, and abjures the protestant Religion, but so without little, he is stobbed in the mouth by a Jesuit, on which, a protestant Gentleman used this freedome with him, *Sir, you have denyed God, and his truth with your mouth, and he hath given you there a stroke, take heed you deny him not also*

wish your heart, lest the next stroke be there, which as the French History sheweth, did accordingly fall out, when he was stobbed by Ravilack, Du Serres his own Historiographer doth shew it was through the very heart, and it was too evident, that sometimes before his death, he had turned cordial, and zealous for the popish interest.

Ferdinand the II. a great persecutor of the Church in Germany, who after his victory over Frederick and the Bohemian States, made it his work to root out the Church and Protestant Religion there, and turned that countrey unto a bloody shambles, not sparing any rank, who would not abjure the truth, but a short time after we finde the avenger of blood (in whose sight that of his Saints is precious) persweth him, raiseth up the Sweds for an adversary, under whose sword most of those cruel wretches; that were the Bohemian scourge do fall, turneth Germany, and the Emperours countreys in a field of blood, breaketh that great army which for many years had given Law to Germany, so that as some historians mention, an army of 24000 Captains, because all old expert souldiers was broken in the plain fields with a hudge slaughter, yea, the violence, and cruelty of the popish party, thus measured out to them, as they had measured to the poor Church of Bohemia, and the Palatinat, and Ferdinand the Emperour broken with breach upon breach, that men may see, the judgment of God pursuing a bloody persecutor:

These barbarous cruel Irish who of late carried on that horrid Massacre there, sparing no Protestants what ever was their age; or rank without compassion to women, or children, O how visibly did the judgment of the Lord reach them, and for that savage blood shed give them blood to drink in great measure, their chief leader *Macguier, Macbune*, and after *Philomy Oneale* taken, publicly executed, most of them consumed by the sword, their spirits so debased, that a few English, or Scots Souldiers would have chased multitudes of them, so that the World might see divine vengeance eminently pursuing them, which in a few years did root out most of that cruel generation.

We have an observable instance also recorded of *Sir James Hamilton* natural Brother to the Earle of *Aaron* who in King *James the V.* time was by the Popish Clergy promoted against such as were then suspected of favouring the Protestant Religion, in which place he was most terrible and cruel against all he could reach, yea, so violent that some of his near kinsmen were by him brought under the lash of his power, but lo, when at his greatest height, whilest he is making it his work to crush the Gospel in its budding forth, this is made the mean of his ruine, and by one of his friends whom he pursued on the accompt of Religion, he is accused of treason, and notwithstanding of the solistation of the Popish clergy for him as their great Patriot, he is presently arraigned, beheaded, and quartered in the publick street of *Edinburg*.

It is also known what violent persecutors *Cardinal Beaton*, and his successor *Bishop Hamilton* were, who were no lesse conspicuous instances of the judgments of the Lord in that time, also what befel one *frier Cambel*, who did bitterly rail on that excellent man *Mr Petrik Hamilton* when he was burnt at *St Andrews*, to whom *Mr Hamilton* at the stake in great vehemency said, wicked man thou knowest the contraire, and hast sometime professed the same, I appeal thee to answer before the judgment seat of *Christ*, and within a few dayes after, (which in that time was very notoure) this *frier* fell sick, and in great horror of conscience as one mad died.

There are indeed many such remarkable instances, as we know hown the judgment of God did pursue these 3 great Apostates from the truth, *Olivares* Chancellour of *France*, *Latomus*, and *Francis Spira*, who after they had quirt their profession, and over their light denyed the truth dyed with great horror of conscience, crying out to bystanders what a hell they found within them, *Du Serres* doth shew, how that Chancellour of *France* through the torment, and anguish of his minde, caused the very bed to shake under him, but since there are many examples of this kinde, already upon record, I do the more briefly touch it; and shall

only

onely adde some few which are worthy of a remark in our own land, how visibly the Lord did pursue by his judgment some who had deserted the truth, and turned opposers, and persecutors thereof in their promoting Antichristian Prelacy contrare to their former profession, and engagements.

1. I shall instance *Mr Patrick Adamson* a Preacher once of great repute in this land, but one whom ambition, and privat interest swayed more, then the interest of Christ, who insinuating himself in the Kings favour made it his work to overturn the established government and discipline of the Church until he got himself settled Archbishop of St. Andrews and Prelacy by his means advanced, which the Church from her first Reformation from Popery had disclaimed, yea, in this height of his power, and grandour, turned an avowed persecutor of his brethren; at which time he used to boast of 3. things that he said could not fail him, his riches, learning, and the Kings favour, but a little after, as was then most known, he was by the righteous judgment of God brought to this pass that his parts did so far wither, and dry up, that in seeking a blessing on his meat he could scarce speak a few words to sence, though once admired for his eloquence, as for his riches, he was forced to get charity from these Ministers whom he before persecuted, and for the Kings favour he was so abhorred by him that as he himself professed when the stroke of God brought him to some sence of his condition, *he was sure the King did care more for the worst of his dogges then for him*, and thus in great misery dyed, cast off by the World whose favour he had onely sought, his publick acknowledgment of his guilt, and apostacy, and of the Lords hand pursuing the same, was by him selfe subscribed, before divers eminent, and worthy Ministers of the Church, who did also by their subscription attest the same, and was afterwards printed.

It is also manifest how the Lord in his judgment did pursue that wretched man his successour *Bishop Spotswood* who in a more subtile way did endeavour the overturning the

discipline, and liberties of the Church, for setting up of Prelacy, and by underhand dealing got himselfe first thrust in Glasgow, and after to be Archbishop of *St Andrews*, yea, at last, was Chancellour of Scotland, his eldest Son a Barron in Fife, and his second Son President of the Session, his Daughter also married to Rosline then a considerable Barron, but let us see whither this ends, what an eminent example in all these respects of the judgment of God he was, and therein the prophecy of that great man *Mr Welsh* accomplished, who did foretell in a letter whilest he was prisoner at Blacknesse, that he should be as a stone cast out of a sling by the hand of God, his name should rot, and a malediction on his posterity, and truely this is known what become of himself in the year 1638. How he was excommunicated by the Church, did flee into England where in great misery he dyed, his eldest Son *Sir John Spotswood* was sometime brought to beg his bread, which is known to many yet alive, his second Son who was President of the Session, being taken at the battel of Philip-hauch, was beheaded at *St Andrews*, and his Ouy young *Darzie* beheaded at *Edinburgh*, and for his daughter who was married to *Roslin*, it is knowen how quickly after that estate was roored out, and turned from that race.

Mr James Nicolsonne one very eminent in his time for parts, and judgment in the affaires of the Church, yea, once very zealous for the truth, and a great opposer of Prelacy, when it first begun to assault the Church, but at last was turned aside, by Court insinuations, gets the Bishoprick of *Dunkel*, yea, turns most forward to promote that interest, but lo in a short time he is stricken by the Lord with sicknes, and great horreur of conscience within, can get no rest, his friends in vain endeavouring to comfort him, and when they would have brought phisicians, he told them his disease was of another kind, for which they could give no phisick, which pressed him more then his sicknes, that against so much light, and over the belly of his conscience he had opposed the truth, and yielded up
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of the Scripture.

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the liberties of the Kingdome of Christ to please an earthly King, and he charged his Children that nothing which he had acquired since he was Prelate, should go amongst the rest of his estate, and thus in great bitternes, and grief died, whereupon his brother in Law Mr David Lindsey then a witnes made some Verses in Latin.

Solatur frustra conjunx, solantur amici.

Et medicum accersi, sedulo quisque jubet.

Sed dare solamen nemo, dare nemo salutem,

Te præter poteris, Rex Jacobe, mihi,

Quæ corpus gravat, atque animam, tantum exime mihi.

Huic caput, hujus onus me premit, & perimit.

Mr. William Couper, sometime minister of Perth, one who witnessed much zeal against Prelacy, both by preaching, and writing, in a letter to Mr. George Grhame, who had writ to him entreating his charity towards his own conforming, he hath these words. Sir, for your self I never hated you, but the course you are in I never loved, how dangerous is their estate who cannot rise but with the fall of many, who in Christ have entred the right way to the ministry, closing these fountaines which God hath opened; doing in a matter of conscience with doubting, turns mens lights to darknes, whence followes induration, therefore I cannot stand with you except to witnes to God in my heart against you, and thus shuts up his letter, consider your selfe where you was, and where you now are, & quantulum sit illud propter quod nos reliquisti, this I set down to shew what sometimes he was, yet shortly after this man turns to a Bishoprick, was loathed by the Godly in that time, some of his old friends brought his own sermons to him, and desired him to reconcile them with his after actings, which did visibly affright and disquiet him, and one day being at pastime near to Leith, he was suddenly terrified with apprehension that he saw armed men coming upon him; these who were with him told him, there was no such thing, it was only a dream, whereupon he became silent, and fell a trembling, but after

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he went home, took bed, and dyed in much anguish, and trouble of spirit, being observed to point oft with his finger to the earth crying out these words, *a fallen Star, a fallen Star*. It was also known how for divers years, he had been seised upon with an Hypochondriack distemper apprehending he was all glasse, whereupon worthy *Mr Simson of Sterling* who had sometimes been his familiar, hearing of his Court-advancement had this line.

Aureus, heu, fragilem confrigit malleus urnam.

A very convincing instance of the judgment of God in that time, was one *Mr Andrew Foster*, minister at Dumfermling who being sent Commissioner to the Assembly at Glasgow 1610, and solemnly adjured, as he should answer to Jesus Christ, by his brethren, not to consent to any alteration of the government of the Church, yet notwithstanding voted for Prelacy, having got 50 Merks from the Earle of Dumbar, who made use of that argument to break some of these wretches, a small sum indeed to sell the cause of Christ, and by him very dear bought, for after his return, he falleth in sickness, and upon his recovery from that was seised with horreur of conscience, so that he run out of the pulpit whilest he was going to preach, confessing he had sold Christ at that Assembly for money, that being poor, and having a numerous family, he chafed rather to make haste, then beleve, and thus laid a side his ministry requesting *Mr John Murrey*, who then was silenced by the Bishop that for Christs sake he would take the charge of that place, after which he fell in a great distraction and became in some measure madde, and though he did something recover, yet, dyed in great infamy, poor, and drowned in debt, a very convincing example of the judgment of God. This old *Mr Row of Carnock* being then a minister in the same Presbitery lets down under his hand which he most certainly knew.

I shall onely adde 2 remarkable instances of the Lords judgement within these few years that should not be past without a remark.

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The first relates to a considerable family in this countrey, who made it their work to trouble, and persecute the Minister of that Parish, an eminently holy and faithful man, yea, upon the accompt of his faithfulness; the old Laird of that house, out of malice doth persue him with a false libel before the Synod, using all means he could to reproach his name, having it as his design, either to get him broken, and put out of the Parish, or at least to crush his spirit, and weaken him in the exercise of the ministry; but doth there meet with a disappointment, the Lord clearing the innocence of his servant, and the malice of the other, so that even such who otherwayes wanted not a prejudice at him, were forced to acknowledge this, at which time that Gentleman, whilst he went to the stable where his horses were, being then at the Synod upon that accompt, is in the place stricken with sickness, forced to haste home and take bed and there seised with horrour of conscience, which made him oft cry, intreating most earnestly for his Minister whom he had thus persecuted, and oft had these words, *O to see his face*; yea told his friends that if he would not come to him, they would carry him to his house, but his Lady out of malice did in a most rude, and violent way hinder the Ministers access to him, and thus that poor Gentleman in great horrour, and anguish dyeth: after his death his Lady doth still pursue the quarrel with no lesse malice until she also falleth sick, and therewith had much terrour upon her conscience, yea, did no lesse cry out for the Minister, who then was providentially absent, so that she was put to cry, and in that denied, which she did hinder to her poor husband, though at last, he came to her before her death, to whom she with much bitterness confessed her wrong. After this a young man their chaplain, who had been engaged by them to appear as a witness against that godly man was so terrified in his conscience that he could get no rest until he went to the next Synod, to acknowledge that horrid sin, in bearing false witness against his Minister, but being there kept by some from a publick appearance, he went to another

part of the countrey, where it is certainly reported he dyed distracted. Now last of all the young Laird who did succeed in that estate, would needs pursue the quarrel, and finding more accessse through the change of the time, did so endeavour with some who were in power, that an order was past for banishing him out of that Parish, and though he was then otherwayes staged, upon the accompt of the publick cause, yet, it was known the violent pursuit of that Gentleman was the main cause of this sentence, which these who had hand in passing it did themselves confesse, for he had solemnly sworn, that if he lived in that place, that man should not be Minister there, but lo a few dayes after, having returned to his house, and boasting how he had kept his word, and now got his Minister cast out of the parish, he was suddenly struck by the Lord with an high fever, which plucked him away in the very strength of his yeares. This I had related as it is here set down, from a grave Christian, the party himselfe being present, which he did humbly decline to relate, though he could not but assent thereto.

Second is one David Macbryar who was a member of the late Parliament being one of the commissioners of the Burrowes, a man most notour in the countrey where he lived for a lewd, and grosse practice, but most remarkable and known beyond others for his violence, and rage against the Godly, as he shewed by his carriage, both in the Parliament, and afterwards where he could have accessse did set himselfe to trouble, and persecute such under that reproachful name of fanaticks, but within some time thereof whilest he was forced to retire by reason of debts, for fear of caption, he was found one day walking alone by one who was then comed out of the North to that countrey, and had ridden forth, to see if he could catch any of that party whom he judged was then lurking, and supposing upon his rencounter that he was surely one of these, would needs apprehend him, but he upon his resistance, and struggling against him was by him run through with a sword, and immediatly killed on the place upon that very accompt

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accompt, and perswasion, that he was a phanatick, and rebel as he then rearmed him, thus he who had declared him self an enemy to the people of God whom he was wont in reproach to call phanaticks, was himself under that very notion, and upon that ground cutted down by one of his own stamp, and principles. O was not this the finger of God, and a convincing proof of his righteous judgment.

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FIFTH Witnes which holds forth the Lords eminent appearing, and something of an extraordinary power, in the late raising, and reformation of the Church from Antichristianisme, is this *that large measure of the Spirit, and untletting thereof which did convincingly follow the Gospel and ministry of the word in these last times*, a truth which we must say hath been manifest, and by many solemn proofes thereof demonstrat, no lesse then in the first planting of the christian Church.

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It is undeniable how great a witnes to the truth, the Spirit, and down-powring thereof is, for this is Gods own seal, which is not put to a lye, or falshood, thus he beares witnes to his work in the hearts of his people, and by this also the Lord doth seal, and attest the doctrine of the Church, and commission of his servants who publish the same, yea, at some special seasons, when the truth hath least countenance, or encouragement from without, times of contradiction, when men wil not receive its testimony, and a great speate of opposition is to the Gospel, then hath this in a more full and large measure been discernable; thus did the Lord eminently own, and confirm the Christian Religion in the dayes of the Apostles, and for some following ages, by so great a downpowring of the Spirit, such visible, and extraordinary effects thereof as did then astonish the World, and force men to confesse something above nature, that this was surely the great work, and pouer of God; and have we not also cause to say, that thus the Lord hath born a very solemn testimony to his truth, the work of reformation, and doctrine of the reformed

Churches in these late times; anent which I dare appeal bystanders, yea, the adversaries to their conscience, if without shutting their eyes, they could shift the conviction of a convincing appearance of God in the power, and efficacy of the Spirit, even in a more then ordinary way accompanying the word, and ordinances, a power which carried kingdomes, and cities before it, yea in a very short time over the belly of greatest violence, and opposition: to clear this a little I shall point at some few remarkable evidences, which might stare the grossest of men in the face, and in some measure convince them of this truth.

1. It is evident that marvellous conquest which the Gospel had in Germany, by the ministry of *Luther*, *Melancthon*, *Bucer*, *Martyr*, *Musculus*; and a few others of these excellent instruments whom the Lord then sent forth, it was not this a day of the Spirit, and powring forth thereof in a large measure, a day of the gospels triumph, not by might, or by power, yet such as before it the World could not stand, cities and countreys might then be said to be born at once, the arme of the Lord revealed with the same, that men were either scorched, or truely warmed and gained thereby. Did not that marvellous power, and efficacy of the spirit also attend the ministry of *Zuinglius*, and *Oecolampadius*, in *Zurick*, and *Basile*, when so through a reformation followed, to the throwing down of Images, abolishing of the Masse by publick authority notwithstanding of its long continuance, and this in a short time; the spirit, and power of God did very eminently appear also, in these famous plantations of the Gospel by the Ministry of *Calvine*, *Farel*, and *Viret* in *Geneva*, *Lausania*, and other adjacent Provinces. It is written in the life of *Viret*, that at *Lyons* which was a great populous city, he preached in an open place, where divers thousands were converted to the truth, yea, some who came by with no purpose to hear, only out of curiosity stepped in, were so wrought on and overcome with the power of the word, as for that time made them neglect their other businesse.

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Mr *Wishart* in Scotland can also witness this truth, whence so marvellous a change did quickly follow, in these places where he preached through *Angus, Lothian*, and the western parts, yea, how much the spirits of the people were then raised and affected with the word, but this being a thing so known from the histories of that time, I only name.

3. Besides these which are more known, and upon publick record, I must here instance a very solemn, and extraordinary outletting of the spirit, which about the year 1625. and thereafter was in the West of Scotland, whilst the persecution of the Church there was hot from the prelatic party; this by the prophane rabble of that time was called the *Stewarton Sicknes*, for in that parish first, but after through much of that countrey particularly at *Irwine* under the ministry of famous *Mr Dickson* it was most remarkable, where it can be said (which divers Ministers, and Christians yet alive can witness) that for a considerable time, few Sabbaths did passe without some evidently converted, and some convincing proofes of the power of God accompanying his word, yea that many were so choaked and taken by the heart, that through terrour, the spirit in such a measure convincing them of sin, in hearing of the word, they have been made to fall over, and thus carried out of the Church, who after proved most solid and lively Christians, and as it was known some of the most grosse who used to mock at religion, being engaged, upon the same that went abroad of such things, to go to some of these parts where the Gospel was then most lively, have been effectually reached before their return, with a visible change following the same, and truly, this great spring tide which I may so call of the Gospel, was not of a short time, but for some yeares continuance, yea thus like a spreading moor-burn, the power of Godlines did advance from one place to another, which put a marvellous lustre on these parts of the countrey, the favour whereof brought many from other parts of the land to see the truth of the same.

4. I must also mention that solemn Communion at the Kirk of the Schots 20 June 1630. at which time there was so convincing an appearance of God, and down powring of the Spirit, even in an extraordinary way, that did follow the ordinances especially that sermon on the Munday 21 June, with a strange unusual motion on the hearers, who in a great multitude were there conveyed of divers ranks, that it was known, which I can speak on sure ground, near 500 had at that time a discernable change wrought on them of whom most proved lively Christians afterward, it was the sowing of a seed through Clideldale so as many of most eminent Christians in that countrey, could date either their conversion, or some remarkable confirmation in their case from that day; and truly this was the more remarkable that one after much reluctance by a special, and unexpected providence was called to preach that sermon on the Munday, which then was not usually practised, and the night before by most of the Christians there was spent in prayer, so that the Munday work, as a convincing return of prayer might be discerned.

5. I shall here also instance that solempne, and great work of God, which was in the Church of Ireland some years before the fall of prelacy about the year 1628. and some years thereafter, which as many grave, and solid Christians yet alive can witness, who were there present, was bright, and hot sun-blink of the Gospel, yea, may with sobriety be said, to have been one of the largest manifestations of the Spirit and of the most solemn times of the downpowring thereof that almost since the dayes of the Apostles hath been seen, where the power of God did sensibly accompany the word with an unusual motion upon the hearers, and a very great tack as to the conversion of souls to Christ, the goings of the Lord then full of majesty, and the shout of a King was heard in the solemn meetings of his people, that as a judicious old Christian who was there present, did expresse it, he thought it was like a dazeling beam, and ray of God, with such an unusual brightnes, as even forced bystanders to an astonishment, a

very effectual door opened, with more then ordinary enlargement, which the Ministers of Christ there did find in preaching the word, whilst the people might be seen hearing the same in a melting frame with much tendernes of spirit; surely this was the very power of God, a convincing of the truth, and ministry of his Servants, who were then persecuted by the Prelats, yea, a thing which as was known had an awful impression, and was a terrour to their adversaries. I remember amongst other passages what a worthy Christian told me, how sometimes in hearing the word, such a power, and evidence of the Lords presence was with it, that he hath been forced to rise, and look through the Church, and see what the people were doing, thinking from what he felt on his own spirit it was wonder how any could go away without some change upon them. And then it was sweet, and easy for Christians to come 30, 40 miles to these solemn Communion which they had, and there continue from the time they came, until they returned, without wearying, or making use of sleep, yea, but little either meat, or drink, and as some of them professed did not feel the need thereof, but went away most fresh, and vigorous, their souls so filled with sence of God.

6. That was also a remarkable time wherein the Lord did let forth much of the Spirit on his people in the year 1638, when this Nation did solemnly enter in Covenant, which many yet alive at this day do know, how the spirits of men were raised, and wrought on by the word, the ordinances lively, and longed after, for then did the Nation own the Lord, and was visibly owned by him, much zeal, and an enlarged heart did appear for the publick cause, personal reformation seriously set about, and then also was there a remarkable gale of providence that did extend the aetings of his people, which did astonish their adversaries, and forced many of them to feign subjection. Alas how is our night comed on, for the Lord hath in anger covered the face of the Daughter of Zion with a dark cloud.

7. Must not we also say, since the land was engaged by Covenant to the Lord in these late times, what a solemn outletting of the spirit hath been seen, a large harvest with much of the fruit of the Gospel discernable, which we may say with a warrant, hath been proven in the inbringing of thousands to Christ, a part whereof now are in glory, and many yet live who are a visible seal to this truth, of whom I am sure some will not lose the remembrance of these sweet refreshing times, which the land for several yeares did enjoy of the Gospel and of many solemn Communion, where a large blessing with much of the Spirit, and power of God was felt accompanying the ordinances; if it were expedient to set down circumstances, I could here point at many such remarkable times, and places, which should clearly demonstrat this.

Now besides these more publick, and obvious proofes, it is known what a great testimony, the experience of the godly in these late times could give to this truth, what they have in a large measure felt of the power, and refreshing outlettings of the spirit within their soul, yea, how oft after forest downcasting have been wonderfully raised above themselves, and filled with the consolation of God, and joy unspeakable; this would indeed make a great volume, to reckon over all these whose experience in these last ages could in a large measure witnes this truth, only to shut this up I shall name these two.

1. *Mr Walsb*, and *Mr Forbes* great witnesses of Christ in this land, when they were prisoners, give this account of their case in a letter to *Mr James Melvin*, and his Uncle then at London, which under the said *Mr Melvins* hand is set down in a manuscript of his, their words are these, *Dear Brethren, we dare say by experience, and our God is witnes we lye not, that unspeakable is the joy, that is in a free and full testimony of Christs royall authority, unspeakable is the joy of suffering for his Kingdome (For on that truth was their suffering stard.) we had never such joy, and peace in preaching of it, as we have found in suffering for the same, we spake before in knowledge, we now speak by experience that the Kingdome*

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of God consists in peace and joy, and in an other letter, thus they say, our joy hath greatly abounded, since the last day (Which was after passing sentence of death on them by allie at Lincolnbow) so that we cannot enough wonder at the riches of his free grace, that should have purchased such a gift upon us to suffer for his Kingdome in which there is joy unspeakable, and glorious, and we are rather in fear, that they (to wit the sufferings) be not continued, and so we be robbed of further consolation than that they should increase, surely there is great consolation in suffering for Christ, we doe not expresse unto you the joy which our God had caused abound in us.

2. I shall also mention that great Servant of Christ Mr Rutherford whose Letters now published can witnes what solemn dayes of the Spirit and sensible outlettings thereof, he oft had in his experience. Though books can tell but little what he really felt, and enjoyed. I shall onely set down some of his last, and dying expressions, which I had from these who were then present, and caused write down the same from his mouth, that may shew how lovely he also was in his death, and how well that did correspond with his former life, some of his words are these, I shall shine, I shall see him as he is, and all the fair company with him, and shall have my large share, it is no easy thing to be a Christian, but as for me I have got the victory, and Christ is holding forth his armes to embrace me. I have had my feares, and faintings as an other sinful man to be carried through credibly, but as sure as ever he spake to me in his word, his spirit witnessed to my heart, saying fear not, he had accepted my suffering, and the outgate should not be matter of prayer, but of praise, he said also; thy word was found, and I did eat it, and it was to me the joy, and rejoycing of my heart, and a little before his death after some fainting, he sayeth now I feel, I beleve, I enjoy, I rejoyce. and turning to Mr Blair then present he said, I feed on Manna, I have Angels food, my name shall be my Redeemer, I know that he shall stand at the last day on the earth, and I shall be caught up in the clouds to meet him in the air, and afterwards hath these words, I sleep in Christ, and when I awake, I shall be satisfied with his likeness.

likenes. O for armes to embrace him; and to one speaking anent his painfulnes in the ministry; he cryeth out I disclaim all, the part I would be in at, is redemption and forgiveness of sins through his blood. And thus full of the spirit, yea, as it were overcome with sensible enjoyment; he breaths out his soul. His last words being Glory, Glory, dwelleth in Emmanuels land.

SIXTH Witnes is that convincing appearance of an extraordinary, and Apostolick spirit on some of these instruments whom the Lord raised up in these last times, and these great enduements where with they were sent forth for the service of the Church, and overthrow of the kingdome of Antichrist: a truth which we must say, if not in such measure yet hath been no lesse evident then in these primitive times, when the Christian Church was planted.

It is clear that extraordinary gifts, and enduements have been let forth to the Church under the New Testament, for with the first dawning of the Gospel there were both Apostles, and Prophets raised up, it cannot be also denyed that since the Cannon of the Scripture was closed, yea, in these late ages there hath been very extraordinary men given to the Church, who had special revelations from the Lord of his minde anent things to come, which though we should not now look after, yet herein did the Lord remarkably condescend, when some great piece of service, and necessity of the Church did more call for it; and truly these were led in no other path then that of the word, though they had a more special discovery, and immediate inbreathing of Gods minde as to the application thereof in particular cases, neither did they presse upon mens conscience to credit the same, but were most cautious, witnessing much humble sobriety on that account.

It is knowen what extraordinary instruments, how wonderfully called, and qualified, Luther, Zwinglius, Calvin, Mr Wishart, and Mr Knox were, whom God sent in these later dayes to grapple with Antichrist, and sound a retreat to his Church from Babylon, likewise Melancthon,

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Beza, Bucere, and Martyr, with divers in Engeland such as *Latimer, Ridley, Bradfoord, &c.* Who indeed were burning, and shining lights in their time, mighty in the Scripture, fervent in spirit, were cloathed with the power, and authority of God, before which the World could not stand. But besides these famous witnesses, of whose life we have something this day on publick record, I must here crave liberty to set down a few more, more late instances of our own Church in Scotland to confirm this truth, such as are but little known to the World, nor any thing of their lives published, which I think a great losse to after generations, who we may say (and this with a warrant, and in sobriety) were men truly extraordinary, eminently serviceable in the work of the Lord, yea, of a Prophetick, and Apostolick Spirit, and such who through grace, did not even come short of the first three; I mean not only these before mentioned but also some of these great lights who were in the first age of the Church after the ascension of Christ.

1. I shall instance *Mr John Welsh* whom the Lord called forth to the ministry at *Kirkcubright* in *Galloway* and afterwards, was transported to the Church of *Air*, whom *Mr Rutherford* in one of his bookes calleth that heavenly Prophetical and Apostolick Man of God, and sheweth that from the witnesses of his life, he had this accompt that of every 24 houres, he gave usually eight to prayer, if other necessary, and urgent duties did not hinder, yea, spent many dayes and nights which he set apart in fasting, and prayer, for the condition of the Church, and the sufferings of the reformed Churches abroad, I can also adde this, from very sure information (and truly anent any of these particulars, I seriously studie to have satisfying grounds anent the certainty thereof) that it was his use even in the coldest winter nights, to rise for prayer, and oftentimes his wife who was an excellent woman hath risen to seek after him, where he hath been found lying on the ground weeping, and wrestling with the Lord, yea, sometimes would have been much of the night alone, in the Church

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of *Aire* on that accompt. One time especially his wife finding him overcharged with grief he told her he had that to presse him which she had not, the soules of 3000 to answer for, whilest he knew not how it was with many of them. And an other time whilest she found him alone, his spirit almost overcharged with anguish, and grief, upon her serious enquiry, said, that the times which were to come on Scotland, were heavy, and sad though she should not see them, and this for the contempt of the Gospel.

Whilest he was prisoner in the Blacknesse in a letter to a Christian lady, he giveth this accompt *what large joy he had to suffer for such a truth, that Jesus Christ was a King, and had a visible Kingdome in the World, even his Church, which was as free to keep its Courts, and exerce discipline by vertue of an in::insick power from Christ, as any Kingdome on the earth, for which he was ready to lay down his life, yea, would rejoyce to be offered up a sacrifice on so glorious a truth, in the close of that letter, he doth also forewarn that judgment was coming to Scotland which should be blood, first by an intestine sword, and then by the sword of a stranger, and that a great sacrifice should be there, both of great men, and mean, the fulfilling whereof hath since been very sensible and is known by many alive, who had that letter long before the late troubles begun; whilest he was thus prisoner, two remarkable passages I have had confirmed by divers worthy of credit, some of whom shewed me they had them from these who were most familiar with the persones themselves, they are indeed strange, but we must also consider he was an extraordinary man.*

The first was this, that one night whilest he did expound the Scripture after his supper, in the prison (as his custome was,) whilest he, with much power, and authority was pressing home the truth, one of the company who had some charge in the Castel, fell a jeering, which Mr *Welsh* observing, and looking earnestly to him, did presently close the Bible, and cease, and a little after having a drink in his hand, he sayeth to a friend at the table before all that were present,

present, there is one so profane and grosse as to contemn and mock at the word of the Lord, but ere a little God shall smite him, with a remarkable stroke of his judgment, which accordingly fell out to the astonishment of the company, for that man did presently drop down to the ground, and dyed. A lady that was then Popish being present by reason of a friend of hers that was prisoner in the castle, was so moved therewith that it proved an help to her after-conversion.

The other passage is this, one *John Steward*, an eminent Christian who lived at *Aire* having come to visit *Mr Welsh* in prison, found him in a more then ordinary way troubled, and sad, and upon his enquiry thereanent, he sayeth, *John*, ye should not be here, go home to *Aire*, for the plague of God is broken up in that place, and cause *Hew Kennedy* provest of that toun (who was also a very singular Christian) convene the people to the streets, and pray together, and the Lord shall hear *Hew Kennedy*, and remove that stroke; this at the first did something astonish the said *John*, and put him to question its truth, having so lately come out of that place, but at his return found it so: and accordingly in every thing it fell out as the man of God had shewed.

After his banishment to which the King did change the sentence of death past upon him at *Linlithgo*, he in a very short time acquired the French tongue, with such a facility therein, as was thought strange by these who knew it; Trochrig in his commentary on the Ephesians, sets down this passage how being called to preach at Salmur a famous University, yea, one of the most learned auditories in France, he did with such boldnes, and authority preach, as though he had been before the meanest congregation, whereat Trochrig being astonished, could not but on his acquaintance with him question him thereanent, whence he had such confidence, and was so litle moved, whilst he preached before strangers, so grave, and judicious an auditory, and in a strange tongue, to whom in a humble way as one more dejected, then lifted up, he gave that

answer, when he considered his being before the Lord, and that he was delivering his message, he could not regard, either great, or small, but all flesh did then go out of his minde.

Whilest he was Minister at St. Jane de Angeli a Protestant town in France, where his Ministry was much blessed with successe, the civil warres did break up, where that city was twice besieged on the Protestant interest, during which time these passages fell out most remarkable, one was, the town being sore straited, and ready to be taken, the enemies having raised a battery, and by a close approach had made a great breach in the wall, *Mr Welsh* hearing thereof (who had much encouraged the people, that their adversaries should not then prevail) went himself with the Canonier up the wals, and desired he would charge such a piece of cannon, and shoot, for God should direct that shot, and cause it prosper, which accordingly did to the astonishment of onlookers dismount that battery, and the Lord so ordered things after, that the King did parley on favourable termes with the city, and did only himself with his court come in without doing any violence. Another marvellous passage was this, the following Sabbath some of the godly in that place, fearing *Mr Welsh* his hazard, did seriously deal with him that he would forbear to go forth, and preach, the Court being there, from which he by no intreaty would be hindred, but shewed them he would adventure to preach the word to his people, and trust the Lord with what concerned himselfe, being more grieved at their fear, and despondence, and that day had a very great auditority both of friends, and others, who came upon the same of such a man, but in time of sermon, a great man of the Court, with some of the Kings own guard was sent to bring him forthwith before the King, and whilest he was entring the Church which had some difficulty by reason of the multitude, *Mr Welsh* did turn himselfe toward that entry, and desired the people to give way to one of the great Piers of France that was coming in, but after whilest he was coming

coming near the pulpit, to execute his commission, by putting force on the Servant of Christ, for his desisting, he did with great authority speak to him, before all the people, and in the name of his Master Jesus Christ charged him that he would not disturb the Worship of God; wherewith that man was so affrighted that he fell a shaking, yea was forced to crutch down, and make no further trouble. A third passage no lesse remarkable was upon the close of Sermon, whilst *Mr Welsh* with much submission, went to the King who was then greatly incensed, and with a threatning countenance asked, what he was, and how he durst preach hæresy so near his person, and with such contumacy carry himself, to which with due reverence bowing himself he did answer. I am Sir, the Servant, and Minister of Jesus Christ, whose truth I preached this day, which if your Majesty rightly knew, ye would have judged it your duty to have comed your self, and heard, and for my doctrine I did this day preach these 3 truths to your People. 1. That man is fallen, and by nature in a lost condition, yea, by his own power, and abilities is not able to help himselfe from that estate. 2. That there is no salvation, or deliverance from wrath by our own merits, but by Jesus Christ and his merit alone. 3. I did also preach this day the just liberties of the Kingdome of France, that your Majesty oweth obedience to Christ onely, who is Head of the Church, and that the Pope, as he is an enemy to Christ, and his trneth, so also to the Kings of the earth, whom he keepeth under slavery to his usurped power. Whereat the King for a time keeping silence with great astonishment turned to some about him, and said, surely this is a man of God. Yea, after did commun with him, and with great respect dismissed him. The year following whilst the differences betwixt the King, and Protestant party did grow, that city was again besieged, taken and in part sacked as *Mr Welsh* did publickly foretel, at which time, it is known, how the King past a solemn order, that none should in the least wrong *Mr Welsh*, or any thing that belonged to him under highest paines, and did after give a safe

conduct to him, for transporting himself to England where he died, King James refusing his return to his own countrey, though earnestly petitioned by his wife for her husbands health.

During his sickness he was so filled, and overcome with the sensible enjoyment of God, that he was sometime overheard in prayer, to have these words, *Lord, hold thy hand, it is enough, thy servant is a clay vessel, and can hold no more.*

II. I shall also here instance *Mr Robert Bruce* who in a very extraordinary way was called to the Ministry, having for a long time followed the study of the Law, both in this countrey, and in France, yea, had some ground to expect a place amongst the Lords of the Session, his father being then a considerable Barron, who had many friends, but a more pressing, and irresistible call from God did otherwise determine.

Whilest he was in the Ministry at Edinburgh he shined as a great light though the whole land, the power and efficacy of the spirit most sensibly accompanying the word he preached, he was a terrour to evil doers, and the authority of God did so appear upon him, and his carriage, with such a Majesty in his countenance, as forced fear, and respect from the greatest in the land, even these who were most avowed haters of Godlines, yea, it was known what an awful impression King James had of him, and did once give him that testimony before many, that he judged *Mr. Bruce* was worthy of the halfe of his Kingdome.

He was a man that had much inward exercise about his own personal case, had been oft assaulted ament that great foundation of truth, if there was a God, which cost him many dayes, and nights wrestling, and when he hath comed up to the pulpit, after being sometime silent, which was his usual way, he would have said *I think it is a great matter to believe there is a God*, telling the People, it was an other thing to believe that, then they judged. But it was also known, by his friends with whom he was familiar, what

what extraordinary confirmations he had from the Lord therein, what near familiarity he did attain in his secret converse with God, yea, truly some things I have had from persons worthy of credit thereanent, would seem so strange, and marvellous, that I forbear to set them down.

The great successe of his Ministry at Edinburgh, Innerneffe, and other places whither providence called him is abundantly known, whilest he was confined at Innerneffe that poor dark countrey was marvellously enlightened, many brought in to Christ by his Ministry, and a seed sown in these places, which even to this day is not wholly worn out. I shall here set down one passage of famous *Mr Henderson* who at his first entry to the Ministry at Leuchars, was very prelatick, and by the Bishop of St Andrewes brought in against the parishes consent, so that the day of his admission, the Church doores being shut by the People, they were forced to break in by a window to get him entrance, but a little after this, upon the report of a Communion where *Mr Bruce* was to help, he would needs from a long- ing he had to hear and see such a man, go secretly there; and placed himselfe in a dark part of the Church where he might not be known, when *Mr Bruce* was come to the pulpit he did for a considerable time keep silence as his maner was, which did some way astonish *Mr Henderson*, but much more when he heard the first words wherewith he begun, which were these, *He that cometh not in by the door, but climbeth up another way, the same is a theif and a robber;* Which did by the Lords blessing at the very present take him by the heart, and had so great an impression on him, that it was the first mean of his conversion.

He was one that had the spirit of discerning in a great measure, did prophetically speak of many things which afterwards came to passe, yea, which I had attested by sober, and grave Christians, who were familiar with him, that divers persons distracted, and of these who were passed all hope of recovery in the falling sicknes, were brought to *Mr Bruce* and after prayer by him in their behalfe were fully recovered:

recovered: this indeed may seem strange, but it is also true, *Mr Bruce* was a great wrestler who had more then ordinary familiarity with his Master.

A little before his death when he was at *Edenbrugh* and through weaknes kept his chamber, there was a meeting of divers godly Ministers at that time there, on some special ground of the Churches concernment, who hearing he was in the town came together, and gave him an account of the actings of these times, the Prelats then designing the service book, after which *Mr Bruce* prayed, and did therein tell over again to the Lord the very substance of their discourse, which was a sad representation of the case of the Church, at which time there was such an extraordinary motion on all present, so sensible a downpowring of the Spirit, that they could hardly contain themselves, yea, which was most strange, even some unusual motion on these who were in other parts of the house, not knowing the cause at that very instant, one *Mr Weemes* of *Lothaker* being then occasionally present, when he went away, said, O how strange a man is this, for he knocked down the Spirit of God on us all, this he said because *Mr Bruce* did divers times knock with his fingers on the table; I had this from a worthy Christian Gentleman in whose mothers house this was.

He was deeply affected with the naughtines andphanity of many Ministers then in the Church, and the unsuitable carriage of others to so great a calling, and did expresse much his fear that the ministry of Scotland would prove the greatest persecutors of the Gospel that it had. If there were a full collection of these remarkable passages, which have been known to others in his life, it would further witness what an extraordinary man that was. I shall only shut this up with learned *Didoclavius* his testimony in his Preface to his *Altare Damascenum*, *Robertus Brusius, Vir genere and virtute nobilis, majestate vultus venerabilis, qui plura animarum milliam Christo lucrificet, cujus anima, si ullius mortalium, absit verbo invidia, sedet in celestibus, anima mea, cum anima tua, Brusi, si ex aliena fide esset pendendum*

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III. Mr *Davidson*, Minister of the Gospel at Salt-Prestoun, may be truly here instanced as one of an extraordinary prophetick Spirit, who was likewise eminently zealous, and faithful for his Master in a time of the Churches defection, as *Didoclavius* in that forementioned preface termes him; *Cato and constans Cato sui temporis*. He did then foresee Prelacies breaking in upon the Church, when King James was pressing the setting up of superintendents under a very specious pretext, and was for that end himself present at the assembly in Dundee, having engaged many, alace too many to consent thereto, but Mr *Davidson* with great boldness rose up, and warned the assembly of the hazard, and told them he saw the knave Bishop, with his mitre comming in under that mask, yea, did solemnly in his own name, and name of the Church of Scotland enter a protestation against that step of defection, and their yeelding up in so far the liberties of the Church to please men.

Whilest he was Minister at Salt-Prestoun the building of a Church was by him much endeavoured, which he did advance much out of his own privat interest, my Lord Newbatle who then had a great interest in the Parish engaging to help it forward; from which he after refused, and thereby frustrated the work. Whereupon Mr *Davidson* told him, these walls that were then begun to be builded, should stand as a witnes against him, and that ere long God should root out him, and his estate out of that Parish, and he should not have a piece of land in the same, which shortly after had a visible accomplishment. It was very clear from many passages of his life that the secret of the Lord was in an extraordinary way with him. Some of these which have been transmitted from them who particularly knew the same are indeed most worthy of a remark.

At a certain assembly of the Church Mr *John Spotswood*, and Mr *James Law* who were then entred into the ministry, were proccesed for some grosse acts of prophanity, where Mr *Davidson* finding the assembly too easy to passe the

same in regard of their parts, and gifts, onely with a rebuke, he did with much vehemency presse their deposition, and after being crossed therein, said, you will needs spare these two men, whereat I am grieved, but the time is coming when they shall trample upon your necks and upon the Church of Scotland. And it is well knowen what an accomplishment this prediction had.

Being with Mr Bruce one time at dinner who was then in great favour with the King, he had these words in giving thanks after meat. *Lord, thy servant here is now a great favorite of the Court, and in much respect, but he shall be within a litle as much persecuted as he is now in favour, and go down the streets, when many who have him this day in esteem will not give him a salutation, which was very manifest afterwards.* And at an other time whilest Mr Robert Bruce, and he were dyning together in the house of one of the Magistrates of the town, who was then a cordial friend to godly Ministers, he did also in his plain and free way break forth with these words, whilest he was giving thanks, *Lord, this good man hath respect for thy sake to thy servants, but he litle knoweth that in a short time he may carry us both who are here to prison, which words did much trouble that honest man, though afterwards it came most exactly to passe.*

There is one more remarkable passage which I should fear to set down, it is so strange, but that I had the same confirmed by some worthy of credit, who shued me, that from these that were present, and familiar with Mr Davidsons they had it related. A Gentleman nearly related to a great family of that Parish, but a most violent hater of piety, did upon that account bear a poor honest man who lived there, having not the least shadow of a provocation, and amongst other sore strokes gave one upon the back with these words, *take this for Mr. Davidsons sake*, after which the honest man was for a time forced to keep his bed, and complained most of that stroke which he gave him on the back, as that which he felt more then all the rest; but the Sabbath following, *Davidson* speaking in the close of his sermon

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ment the oppression of the godly, and enmity which
icked men had to such, did very particularly touch that
e instance, saying, *it was a sad time, a prophane man*
ould thus openly adventure to vent his rage against these who
ere seekers of God in the place, whilest he could have no cause
the very appearance of his image, and with great authority
id, *he who hath done this, were he the Laird, or the Lairds*
ther, ere a few dayes passe, God shall give him a stroke that
the Monarches of the earth dare not challenge, which
as then publickly known how in the close of that very
week, standing before his doore, he was struck dead with
thunder bolt and all his bones crusht.

A little before the death of this great Servant of Christ
aving an occasional rencounter with Mr John Ker a young
Gentleman who was lately come from France, and had
en no thoughts of the ministry, but was in a very courtly
essie, Mr Davidson did in a solemn way charge him to
ast off his scarlet cloak, and lay aside his gilded rapper,
and take him to his book, *for you are the man*, sayes he,
who is to succeed me in the ministry at this place, which so
very astonishing to that Gentleman for the present, yet
ccordingly fell out, he did immediatly succeed him there,
where he was for many yeares an holy and faithful Minister
of the Gospel. This last passage many yet alive who had the
ame from the said Mr John Ker can witnes.

IV. Mr Patrick Simson who was once Minister of Cra-
mond, and after transported to Stirling may be here also
stanced, as a very extraordinary man in the Church, in
is youth he attained to great knowledge in the Lan-
guages, did much study Greek and Latine Authors,
and gave this reason to such who wondred he should
pend so much time in reading these who were but pa-
uns, that he purposed to dedicat all these jewels
which he borrowed from the Egyptians, to the build-
ing of the house of the Lord, it is knowen with
that zeal he did oppose himselfe to the corruptions of that
time, in the year 1584, whilest there was an expresse
charge

charge from the King, for acknowledging Mr Patrick Adamson Archbishop of S. Andrewes, or else lose the maintenance, he did with great vehemency appear against the same, though that man was his uncle upon the mother side, and some who seemed willing to subscribe thereto with such a condition, *according to the Word of God*, he did gravely rebuke, shewing them it could be no false to their conscience, since it was *repugnancia in adiutorio* to subscribe to any humane institution according to the word, when the word did expressly condemn the same. It was also known, he refused the offer of a Bishoprick and afterwards of a yearly pension from the King, which he looked on as a design only to bribe his conscience, which was more dear to him then all the World; and when the assembly at Aberdeen was condemned by the State, he did openly own, and avow the same, and in a very solemn manner denounced the wrath, and judgement of God against these accusers, and convickers of these excellent men, at Linlithgow, who stood for the liberty of the assembly; that notable paper, and protestation given in to the Parliament 1606 (where Prelacy was further established) was by him penned, and out of his own hand given to the Earle of Dumbar, subscribed by many Ministers of the Church who were then there on the account.

His life was most exemplary for piety, and faithfulness in serving his Master, which did preach no lesse to that part of the countrey wherein he lived then his doctrine. One very remarkable passage of his life I do here adventure to set down, having very satisfying grounds as to the certainty of it, from these who knew the same, and had a particular relation of all its circumstances from a grave Christian who had it out of his own mouth, and likewise had it written under old Mr Row of Carnocks hand, who was his familiar in timat friend; it is this. *His Wife Martha Barron* a gracious woman, the wife of his youth with whom her had lived in great love, fell sick, which proved her last sickness, where she was first sore assaulted

the Devil, who pressed in upon her that she should be
 en over to his hand, and after it did resolve in a visible
 traction which for a time grew upon her, so that most
 like to her former way, she would have broke forth
 with dreadfull and horrid expressions, it did most appear
 a Sabbath morning whilest Mr *Simpson* was going to
 church, and whilest for a time he was forced with a heavy
 countenance to stand silent, he at last kneeled down,
 and prayed, which shedid no wayes regard, but a little
 after he turning to the company that were present, told
 them he was sure that these who now were witnesses
 of that sad houre, should yet see a gracious work of
 God on this his Servant, and that the Devils malice against
 that poor woman, should have a shameful foil; her
 traction did still continue until the Tuesday which was
 the 9 of August, which morning at the very dawning of
 day, he goeth to his garden, and shut the doore behinde
 him, where for many houres he was alone, but a godly
 woman who that night was with his wife, *Helen Garner* wife
 to one of the Bailyes of Stirling, being apprehensive of his
 hazard, through his grief, and fasting, could have no
 rest till she knew his case, and by some help climbed up,
 and wan in to the garden, but on a near approach to that
 place, where Mr *Simpson* then was she was terified with
 an extraordinarie noise which through fear made her fall
 to the ground, it seemed, as she related after to others, it
 was like the noise of a great rushing of multitudes together,
 and therewith such a melodious sound, as did make her
 know it was something more then humane, and turned to
 prayer entreating the Lord would pardon her rashnes,
 which affection to his Servant who had been the instrument
 of her good, had carried her to; and after going forward
 finds him lying upon the ground, it was with much entrea-
 y that he did then reveal himselfe in that particular, until
 she promised clossenenes, not to speak it to others so long as
 he lived, but had his allowance if she should survive him,
 which promise she kept, but after his death, did relate
 to these from whom I have had this, he said, O what

am I being dust and ashes that the holy Ministering spirits should be sent by the Lord to deliver a message to me, and shewed him and had a vision of Angels, who did with an audible voice shew him an answer from the Lord of his wifes condition; Now coming over to his house, he said to all who were present time did be of good comfort for ere ten houres of this day I am fashioned that brand shall be plucked out of the fire, after which he miened went to prayer at his wifes bedside, where for a time he allowed lay quiet, but whilest he mentioned Jacobs wrestling in as Mr prayer, she sits straight up in the bed, casting aside the the face courtain, and sayeth, thou art this day Jacob, who has speak be wrestled, and also prevailed, and now God hath made good for it; his words, which he spake this morning to you, for I am plucked and pruned out of the hands of Satan, and he shall have no power over me. Sermon Which interruption made him for a space silent, but after Mr A with great melting of heart proceeded in prayer, and magnified the riches of Gods love towards him; and after prayer Gentle there was sweet, and Christian embracements between but for them, yea, from that houre she did speak most Christianly many and comfortably even to her death, which was on the Friday of the way a day following August 13. 1601, whose last words in the Dum moment of her departure were with a loud voice, Cried this C Lord, in thy hands I commend my spirit. his ow

After this Mr Simpson lived several yeares fervent, and ry, h faithful in the work of the Lord, and one who in private that th walk witnessed such mortification, that all who knew him deface might clearly see, his converse was little in the World, in March 1618. he sayd now shall this moneth put an end to Mana all these things, and accordingly towards the close of it he th was removed by death, at which time he expressed much dovre joy, blessing the Lord for his kindnes, that he had not there been perverted by the sinful courses of these times, and thou might say as the Lord fed Elijah in the wildernes, so in word some respect he had dealt with him all his life time, and he w having these words upon some of his bookes written, Rem get a member O my soul, and never forget the 9 of August, what they consolation the Lord gave thee, and how he performed what he was p spake, according to Zach. 3. ver. 2. is not thin a brand plucked out not f

of the fire, upon which some of his friends speaking to him shewed him anent the same, his answer was, *Absti mihi gloriari in solo voce proprio, nisi in Domino Deo meo.*

Now besides these great men, many others who at that time did shine as lights in the Church may be here also mentioned, who were indeed stars of the first magnitude, eminently zealous, and faithful, and their Ministry followed with much of the power and authority of God, such as Mr Andrew Melvine, of whom it might be said, he had the face of a lion in his masters cause, and feared not to speak before Princes and great men, when the truth called for it; likewise his nevoy Mr James Melvin that holy grave, and prudent Seryant of Christ, Andrew Dunkan, Mr John Seringer, Mr Charles Fereme, Mr James Balsure, &c. One passage I shall here set down worthy of a remark of Mr Andrew Melvine who being prisoner in the Tower, a Gentleman of his acquaintance, got access to visit him, but found him in a sad, deep mule, anent the defection of many Ministers in Scotland, and did deplore the state of the Church there, having lately got an account of their way at that assembly at Glasgow 1610. where the Earle of Dumbar had been active to corrupt divers with money: this Gentleman, desiring to know what word he had for his own countrey got no answer, but upon a second enquiry, he said, I have no vword to send, but am heavily grieved, that the glorious government of the Church of Scotland should be so defaced, and a Popish tyrannical government set up, and thou Manderston (for out of that house Dumbar was come, and he thus stiled him) Hast thou no other thing to do but carry down to Scotland such commissions wherby the poore Church there is wracked; the Lords shall be avenged upon thee and thou shalt never again go down for all thy grandour; which words took such impressiion on that Gentleman that when he went forth he desired some friends, who then waited to get a businesse at court expd by Dumbars moyen, that they would in time, put their affaires to a close, for he was perswaded, the words of that servant of Christ should not fall to the ground; and truely this did very quickly take place

place, that Earle being suddenly struck by death, within a few moneths after, and thus thrown down from the top of his grandour, whilest he was buſſie, perfecting that great house of his at Berwick, and had appointed a sumptuous feast for his daughters marriage, even then did his thoughts perish.

I shall here but adde one instance more of one whom we before named, though not a Minister, yet a great instrument for promoting the work of the Gospel in the place he lived, and on we may say, of an extraordinary spirit, *How Kennedy* proveſt of Aire, of whom I would mention these two passages from ſure knowledge, One was whilest the Merchant Ships of that town were at sea, amongst whom his son John, who was also a choiſe Christian, was at that time he did one night riſe before the breaking of day, and came to the house of his familiar friend *John ſeward*, deſiring he would riſe, and go along with him to some room; whereat the ſaid John being exceedingly aſtoniſhed, he ſayeth to him; *it is no time to linger, let us go pray, for my son with the reſt of our friends now at ſea are at this houre on the very nick of perishing*, and after they had ſpent ſome time in prayer, he aroſe chearfully and ſaid *now they are ſafe* Within a litle after *John ſeward* who had writ this down, with the day, and houre at the return of the Schips, did moſt particularly enquire and found how it did answer in all the circumstances, and in that very houſe of that night, they were to appearance paſt hope of ſafety upon a very dangerous place, and by an extraordinary unexpected providence then delivered.

The other is this, one day being for many houres alone in prayer, whilest ſome of his Christian friends did wait long for him, at laſt, with an unuſual chearfulnes, he came forth, and upon their enquiry anent his ſtay, he told them, it was no wonder for he had that day got mercy to him, and all his, and truly it was very evident, that not one of his Children, but there was large ground of charity that they were truly godly.

Whilest he was dying *Mr Ferguſon* a godly Minister, ſayeth

sayeth to him, you have cause, Sir, to be assured that the Angels of God are now waiting at the stoups of this bed to convoy your soul into Abrahams bosome, to whom his answer was, *I am sure thereof, and if the wals of this house could speak, they could tell how many sweet dayes I have had in secret fellowship with God, and how familiar he hath been with my soul.* I shall only adde Mr *Welshes* testimony in a letter from France to this great man, his words were these, *Happy is that city, yea, happy is that Nation that bath a Hew Kennedy in it, I have my selfe certainly found the answers of his prayers from the Lord in my behalfe.*

(¶) I. Reader, besids these more remarkable passages which in the peruseall of this treatise thou wilt finde droppd apart, concerning the way of God with some of his more eminently faithful Servants, I have in this place cast together some few instances which in the former impression were not hinted.

In the first place thou mayest take notice of these two concerning that walker with God great Master *Bruce*, of whom some things have been spoken elsewhere, and first beside that blessed frame of spirit which appeared in the whole of his converse, he endeavoured especially, whensoever he was to appeare in publick as an Ambassadour of Jesus Christ, to have his Spirit deeply impressed with the Majesty of that God of whom he was to speak, and of the high import it was to the souls of men to have the mysteries of salvation unfolded unto them not with enticing words of mans wisdom but in demonstration of the spirit and power, without which this preached Gospel though in it self the word of life will never prove the power of God to salvation: And therefore though he was known to take much pains on searching the Scripture, that he might know the minde of the Spirit of God by comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and in preparing apposit matter for the edification of his hearers, which he durst not neglect, and wherein he durst not be overly as knowing he was to speake of God, and affraid of the curse threatned for doing

his work negligently; yet this was the least part of his preparation-work, the maine of his businesse lay in having his soul wrought up to some sutablenesse of frame for preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, and making manifest the mystery of the Gospel as he ought, that so his Master by his service might see of the travel of his soul and be satisfied. And knowing that the successe of preaching depended wholly upon the presence of God accompanying the dispensing of Ordinances, his manner was to be much in prayer and supplication in privat before his publick appearances, powring forth his heart before God, and wrestling with him not so much for assistance to the messenger as the message. One instance whereof take as followeth: Being to preach at a solemne occasion he was long in coming to the congregation, some of the people beginning to weary and others wondering at his stay the bells being long rung, and the time far spent, the Beddal was desired to go see what the matter mean't, who coming to his house and finding his chamber door shut, and hearing a sound drew neer and listening overheard *Mr Bruce* often with wuch seriousness say, *I protest I will not go, except thou go with me.* Whereupon the man supposing that some person had been with him withdrew without knocking at the door, who being asked at his returne by a Gentleman the cause of his delay answered, he could not tell but I suppose said he thereis some with *Mr Bruce* who is unwilling to come to Church, and he is so pressing and peremptory to have them come alongs that I overheard him protest most seriously he would not go if they went not with him. However a little after *Mr Bruce* came accompanied with no man, but he came in the fulnesse of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ, and his speech and his preaching was in such evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, that by the shining of his face and that showre of divine influence, wherewith the word spoken was accompanied, it was easy for the hearer to perceive that he had been in the mount with God, and that he had indeed brought that God whom he had met with in
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privat into his mothers house and into the chambers of her that conceived him: Nay he preached ordinarily with so much life and power, and the word spoken by him was accompanied with such a manifest presence, that it was evident to the hearers he was not alone at the work, but that in his strivings to perswade the things which did belong to the Kingdome of God and to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus he laboured thereunto striving according to his working which wrought in him mightily: For though he was no Boanerges as to his voice being of a slow and grave delivery, yet he spoke with so much authority and weight (as becomes the Oracles of God) that some of the most stout hearted of his hearers were ordinarily made to tremble; and by having these doors which formerly had been bolted against Jesus Christ as by an irresistible power broke open, and the secrets of their heart made manifest; they went away under convictions, and carrying with them undenyable proofs of Christ speaking in him and that God was with him of a truth.

The other passage which I present thee with is concerning his death. Being now aged and through infirmity of body confined to his chamber where he was frequently visited by his friends (to whom a conversation in Heaven and the abundant grace of God in him had endeared him) and being asked by one of them how matters now stood betwixt God and his soul, he (with that severity of soul which is the effect of the love of God fixed abroad in the heart and that plerophory under which such walkers with God and workers of righteousness as he was are frequently taken off the stage) made this returne, *When I was a young man, said he, I was diligent and lived by faith in the Son of God, but now I am old and am not able to do so much, yet he condescends to feed me with lumps of sense.*

And that morning before the Lord removed him (his sickness then being mostly a weaknesse through age) he came to break fast at his table; and having as he used eaten one single egge, he said to his daughter, I think I am yet hungry ye may bring me another egge, but instantly

thereafter falling into a deep meditation and after having mused a while; he said, *Hold daughter hold, my Master calls me*, with these words his sight failed him, whereupon he called for the Bible; but finding his sight gone he said, cast up to me the eight Chapter to the Romans, and let my finger on these words, *I am perswaded that neither death nor life, &c. shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus my Lord.* Now, said he, is my finger upon them, when they told him it was, without any more he said, *Now God be with you my children, I have breakefasted with you and shall sup with my Lord Jesus Christ this night*: And so gave up the Ghost, death shutting his eyes that he might see God. Thus that valiant Champion for the truth, who in his appearing to plead for the Crowne and interest of Jesus Christ knew not what it was to be daunted by the face and frownes of the highest and most incensed adversaries, was by his Master taken off the field as more then a conquerour, and as the reward of much faithful diligence about the souls of others, and much pains and serioulnesse about making his owne calling and election sure, had an enternace ministred unto him abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

II. In the next place, Reader, I shall, in prosecution of my designe which is thy edification, hint to thee some things concerning that burning and shining Light *Mr John Welsh*, whose name is so famous and savory for the great things which God did by him and for him, that I should much disappoint thy expectation if making mention of him, I should not acquaint thee with some thing rare and extraordinary; and therefore though it be beside my designe to give thee the full history of his or the rest of these great mens lives, yet that I may not altogether frustrate thy expectation take these few remarkable passages which follow. As first, an eminently holy Minister yet alive and deservedly of esteem in the Church of Christ told me from certaine knowledge, that two men coming with packs of cloath to
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the towne of Air from a neighbouring place, &c. where there was yet no suspicion that the Lord's hand had smitten it with the plague, which was then fore in the land, The sentry at the bridge held them out, notwithstanding they had a passe, till the Magistrate came; who though he could not disprove their passe, yet would not permit them to enter the towne, till he sent for *Mr Welsh*: So the Baylie bids them disburden their beasts, tell he considered what was to be done, a little after *Mr Welsh* coming, the Magistrate sayes to him, Sir, here are men come from such a place, we have heard of no plague there; besides, they have a passe from known men, what shall we do? *Mr Welsh* made no answer but uncovering his head, stood in the midst of the company which then followed him, and having his eyes directed to Heaven (yet speaking nothing) neer half a quarter of an houre, at last said, Bayly, Cause these men put on their packs again and be gone, for if God be in Heaven, the plague of God is in these packs. These men returned and opened their packs in Cumnock, and it was observed that such contagion was therein that all in that village dyed, there was not a man left to bury the dead.

He was famous in his generation for the power he had in prevailing with God by prayer and supplication, whereof take these following instances amongst the many which might be given.

One is, that being on a certain night under an extraordinary pressure of spirit to go and poure forth his heart to God, he left his wife in bed, and going out to a garden spent most of the night in that exercise, (a thing so ordinary to him that he used to say, he wondered how a Christian could ly a bed all night without rising to spend some of the night in prayer and praise,) but his wife weary, at last went to seek for him, but missing him in his ordinary place, went into other gardens, by such passages as she knew, at last she heard a voice, and drawing near to it, could hear him speak a few words, but with great force and fervency, mixed and accompanied with floudes of teares, which were these, *O God, wilt thou not give me*

Scotland! O God, wilt thou not give me Scotland! She being weary and afraid to interrupt him, went home, and heard not the close. At last he came home, and re-entring his bed, his wife began to reprove his unmercifulnesse to his own body, then asked him, what it was he was saying; for she told she heard him. Well, said he, you had better have been in your bed, but since ye heard, I tell you, I have indured a great fight for Scotland this night, and hardly could I get a remnant reserved, yet he will be gracious.

After this he arose another night, but went not out of doores, but in a chamber he travelled and groined so, as his wife impatient did rise several times, calling him to bed; but he waited his time, and when he came he began a modest expostulation with him for tarrying: *Hold thy peace*; said he, *it will be well with us, but I shall never preach another preaching in Aire*: And having fallen asleep, before he awaked the messenger was come who by command carried him prisoner to the Castle of Edinburgh.

When he was prisoner in the Castle of Edinburgh, the Lord *Uchiltree* was Captain, whose sister was *Mr Welsh* his mother in law being *John Knox's* wife: Yet being much taken up in King James his Court, he took not time to be so comfortable to his cousin *Welsh* as he should: But being convinced of his own unkindnesse he caused *Mr Welsh* suppe with him one night in the Castle, where were also several other Gentlemen, and amongst them a Popish youth, sate toward the lower end of the table, *Mr Welsh* being by the Captaine, set at the upper end intertained the company with grave and edifying discourse which all delighted to hear, save this young Papist who with laughter and derision laboured to silence him, which was little regarded by *Mr Welsh*. But after supper while the guests sate a little, this youth stood up at the lower end of the table, and while *Mr Welsh* proceeded from grave to gracious entertainment of his company, the youth came to that height of insolence as with the finger to point at him and with the face to make scouting grimaces, whereby he grieved the holy Man, so

as on a suddain he was forced to a silence.

The whole company who had heard him with delight were silent with him: Within a little *Mr Welsh* as moved by the Spirit of God, broke forth into these words: *Gentlemen, the Spirit of God is provoked against us, and I shall intreat you not to be afraid to see what God shall do among you before you rise from the table, for he will smite some one of you with death before you go hence.* All were silently astonish'd, waiting to see the issue with fear. And while every man feared himselfe, except the insolent youth, he fel down dead suddenly at the foot of the table to shew the power of Gods jealousie against the mockers of his Spirit and the offenders of his grace. This History, with variation of some circumstances, is set down before Page 415.

One day while *Mr Welsh* looked out at his chamber window in the Castle, he happened to see the Captain, and called unto him, saying, God save you my Lord: The Captain acknowledging his neglect and asking for *Mr Welsh* his welfare desired to know how he might serve him. In nothing, said *Mr Welsh*, if you be well, except you would carry my petition to his Majesty intreating for liberty to preach the Gospel. I willingly will, said the Captain, therefore send it to me. Nay, said *Mr Welsh*, I am your Kinsman, I love you so well as to warn you not to take it in charge, except you resolve to deal truely in delivering it and in getting me an answer. I shall bear the blame, said the Captain, if I do it not, I beseech you, my Lord, said the other, undertake not unlesse you mind to do it, for the hazard is great. Well, *Uchiltry* takes it, but not coming in an opportune season (for he came when the King was passionately moved on another occasion) he thought not fit then to give it, and as at that time he deferred, so thereafter he neglected, and at last quit forgot to deliver it at all. For which his heart smiting him he durst hardly be seen of *Mr Welsh* for three moneths. Yet conscience forgetting as well as he, he came to the same place where *Mr Welsh* at first called him: And now *Mr Welsh* asked how he did and what was become of his petition? The Captain

surprised

surprised answered, I delivered it to his Majesty, but he was in a passion, and it seemes it hath fallen by, for I have not gotten an answer. Nay my Lord, said *Mr VVelsby*, you should not lye to God and to me, I know you delivered it not, I am sory my Lord for your lot, I warned you not to be false to God, and now I tell you, God shall take your estate and honours in Scotland, and shall give them to your neighbour, and this in your own time. This troubled the Lord *Uchiltry*, and came truely to passe, for he being the eldest son of the good Lord *Uchiltry* a reformer, was forced in his own time to quite all and give both estate and honours to James, the son of Captain James, the second brother who was the last of that house.

III. Concerning Master *John Scrimger*, Minister at Kinghorn. There was a godly Woman under his charge called ——— who fell sick of a very lingering sicknesse, and was all the while assaulted with strong temptations apprehending she was a cast away (yet had she not onely given ground for charity but her Christian conversation for a long time had put the reality of the grace of God in her beyond debat with the more discerning who knew her) *Mr Scrimger* often visited her, while in this deep exercise, conferred with her, prayed over her, but her trouble remained notwithstanding and the terrors of God still lodged with her. When she drew near her dissolution, she became worse both in body and spirit; and sent for *Mr Scrimger*, who at that time took two of his elders with him, and in their presence first endeavoured to comfort her by exhortation and conference, then he prayed, and seeing her the nearer her end seemingly the worse, he made some of the elders to pray, and again he himselfe prayed. But Satan still raged the more and her soul the more removed from peace. Then he sate in a muse a litle space and said, What's this? our laying before her grounds of comfort will not do it, conference will not do it, prayer will not do it, we must use an other remedy. Sure I am this is a Daughter of Abraham, sure I am, I am the the Elder, sure I

am she hath sent for me. And therefore in name of God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who sent him to redeem sinners, in name of Jesus Christ who obeyed the Father, and came to save us, in name of the holy and blessed Spirit, our Quickner and Sanctifier, I the Elder command thee a Daughter of Abraham, to be loosed from these bonds. And immediately peace and joy succeeded.

An example it is of God's power in that time to make our hair stand at the force of faith and boldness of Spirit; rather than to be imitated by such as wanting the ancient holynesse would rather have a Spirit for miracles than for salvation.

IV. I shall here insert some special and edifying remarks of the life of that great and worthy servant of Jesus Christ *Mr Robert Blair* (well known to this Church it being but a few years since his death) who was deservedly numbered among the first of these great and worthy instruments whom the Lord raised up amongst us for carrying on the late blessed reformation. Some of which I knew from himself (though from much humble modesty he too much in these things concealed himself, and shunned the setting down thereof under his own hand whereto he was much pressed) but the most of them I had from one of his special intimate friends and a grave and eminent Minister of this Church.

In his younger years it was known how much he outrun others in his studies, and gave these who knew him ground to hope what after was seen; the Lord was pleased to call him by the Ministry of famous *Trechrig* in whose hand (these were his own words) did the Lord put the key that first opened his heart, upon his first coming forth to preach, he by a remarkable providence had *Master Bruce* whom you have formerly mentioned to be his hearer; and as I heard himself declare it was his desire to have the judgment of so great a man upon his discourse, whose censure he said he would never forget, it had been so much blessed: Which was this, I found saith he *your sermon very polished and digested* (which

(which was indeed easie to one of his parts) *but there is one thing I did miss in it, to wit the Spirit of God I found not that.* This grave Mr Blair did often speak to others, which then took a deep impression upon himself, and helped him to see it was something els to be a minister of Jesus Christ then to be a knowing and eloquent preacher. He was for divers years Regent in the colledge of *Glasgow*, where he made it his work to train up these under his charge in the study of godliness aswel as of humane learning: but by reason of the prejudice of some who had power in that place he could not long stay. One passage whilest he was there, I did hear him relate: upon the report of some sinful oath to be pressed upon the Masters of the colledge, he inquired at a fellow Regent of his, Mr *Gawin forsyth* what he would do in that matter, whose answer was, *by my faith I must live, to whom Mr Blair said, Sir I will not swear by my faith as you do, but truly I intend to live by my faith, you may choise your own way; but I will adventure on the Lord;* that wretched man did continue, to whom the matter of an oath was a smal thing, after he was gone: but, which is worthy of a remark, many years after Mr *forsyth* fell in such poverty as forced his supplicating of the general assembly for some relieff, where worthy Mr Blair was then made choise of to preside as Moderator, and upon his appearance in that deplorable case could not shune the observing of that former passage, and upon his adress to him in private put him in mind thereof, though with great tenderness, as he said, not in the least to upbraid him in his low condition, but to let him see he had been truly carried through by his faith at which he formerly had scoffed.

After his being put from the colledge, he went to visite his brother then Minister at *Dumbarton*, and confessed that by the way he could not forbear singing from joy in the remembrance of Gods being with him, and helping him to be instrumental in the good of the youth who had been under his inspection; he went after to *Ireland* being trysted with

with a call from *Bangor*, and upon the sight of land his heart was so immediately made to exult within him for joy, that as he said he could scarce bear the same. Whilest he came near *Bangor* he had a strong impression borne in upon him that the Dean of *Bangor* was sick unto death and should live no more, which at first he rejected as an unpertinent suggestion, but going further on his way, it was with such power impressed upon his spirit, as forced him to take notice of it; when he came to the place, he found the Dean was indeed lying sick, and though a most naughty man, made him not only welcome upon his visite, but encouraged him to hold on in his way, and told him he was to succeed him in that charge, yea he spoke so unlike himself, and in a strain so different from what was usual unto him, that a Gentel woman standing by said to some others, an Angel is speaking out of the Dean's bed to *Mr Blair*, thinking it could not be such a man.

He had been once troubled with an appearing of the Devil whilest he was a Regent in the colledge, who like a rooked boy that waited on him stood up and laughed him in the face, whilest he was serious in his chamber, and immediately disappeared: but after whilest he was at *Bangor* there was one in that Parish who went to *Scotland* with horses to sell, and at a fair was trysted with a man who at once was willing to buy them all; but pretending he had not all that money at present gave him bond until Mertihefs the poor man having no suspicion, returns; and near that time, going homeward from *Bangor* one night, his Merchant meets him, who was the Devil; now said he, you know my bargain, how I bought you at such a place, and I am come as I promised to pay you the price. Bought he, said the other trembling, you bought but my horses, he sayes the Devil I will let you know I bought your self, and to the poor man confounded with fear said, he must either kill some body, and the more excellent the person the better it would be for him, else he would not free him, and particularly charged him to kill *Mr Blair*. The man

man overcome with terror, and through the violence of that temptation, determined the thing, and went to *Mr Blair's* house with a dagger in his right hand hid beneath his cloak, and though much confounded was moving to get it out: but after *Mr Blair's* speaking to him the man fell a trembling so extremely, that upon a further inquiry he freely declared for what end he was come, and that he had laboured to draw out his dagger, but it would not come from the scabbard, though he knew not what hindered it; for then when he essayed to draw it forth again it came out with much ease. *Master Blair* blessing the Lord exhorted him to choise him for his refuge, he was after threatened and much terrified by the Devil but nothing more followed.

After some time in the Ministry at *Bangor*, he with others of his worthy bretheren was silenced by the Bishop and as he told himself, was in the Church when the Bishop (one Eckline) did himself intimate the sentence upon which *Mr Blair* rose up publickly in the congregation and with great Authority did cite the Bishop to appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ to answer for what he was doing contrary to his own light and conscience, against these whom he knew to be faithful Ministers of the gospel, whereupon the man was so astonished, that he immediately cryed out, I appeal from the tribunal of the justice of God to the throne of his mercy, to whom *Mr Blair* replyed, Sir your appeal is rejected, for you know what you are doing is directly against your conscience, which hath made you bear witness to us as the servants of Jesus Christ. A little moneths after the Bishop fell sick, and the physicians inquiring about his case, he only could say my conscience, is so dyed.

Whilest under restraint he was by his brethren sent to England to deal with the King for their liberty, when he was on the road he was taken with a mighty fit of the stone which made him lye upon his horse's neck not being able to hold up his back, which much disquieted him as being a probable let upon such an important business. And in this

the violence of nature turned to the Lord in prayer, but immediately after
went to Mr. May saying if he could possibly lift up his back, he found to his
hid benefit, his tormenting pain quite gone, and per-
moving to gett ease, nor did it recur to him for two years after. A
him the power of dayes after in the same journey his horse fell very lame,
further inquiry which did in some measure trouble him having no conve-
ne, and to gett access to provide himself of an other, and even upon
it would not, did adress to the Lord by prayer that in such a strait he
not what his might be helped, which he graciously condescended to do,
forth again in that the horse was to his amazement healed, and without
the Lord's least halt did carry him to London.

is after this. Whilest he was there he did essay what he could to ac-
omplish his business, but could have no access to the King,
as some who were his friends at court after trial assured
for, he who had no ground to hope in that matter; yet he resolv-
the Bishop, to continow and roll the business over on the Lord, for
h when whose service he was only importuning an open door; and
he sentence, one day having gone to Greenwich, where the court then
congregation was, being wearied with awaiting without access he retir-
up to ascend into the park to pray, where after much wrestling with
for what he desired, he was in a more then ordinary way brought near,
ence, again had so clear a return, that he could not withstand the
f the gospel assurance he got that his way should be successfull, but the
immediate appearance thereof in an ordinary way being so small pres-
sage of God him to adventure humbly the asking of a signe from
clair replies the Lord, and immediately after there being a considerable
you are downwind that blew hard, and made a noise among the bulrushes
th made what grew there, so great a calme did presently follow that
rist. A not the least plant of the ground did any wayes move or stir,
itians inquiry went thence to London, and within a few dayes in a most
science, a strange way had his petition presented to the King and ac-
cepted; yea in St James's park was particularly called for,
thren sent where the King with his own hand did not only signe it,
y, when he wrote these words in the margin which he directed to
of the stone Depute *indulge the education of these Ministers for they are*
t being able men.

m as being a. When he was in England, he had a strange discovery of
And in this wife (an excellent gentlewoman) her dying, and that she
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was lying in such a bed, and a Christian friend of his particular acquaintance beside her, when he came home; he found his wife in health; but a little after fell sicke and died in that same bed with that friend sitting by her, and with all these particular circumstances. These are but a few of many great and remarkable passages in that excellent man's life who was himself as great an observer of providence as any in the age he lived in, and this he had notably verified in himself which was an usual saying of his to others *observable things do follow them who are given to observation.*

V. This seems an eminent instance of the providence of God, and worthy to be on record, that concerns the Laird of Raith, of a known, and ancient family in this countrey, who in the beginning of the reformation was a professed Papist; but the Lord directing that great servant of his *Mr VVishart* one night very late to his house, who, after some repulse from a servant, got access to this Gentleman, and told him he was come with the offer of the Gospel of Christ to him, and his family, if he would receive it, which was in that manner backed with the authority of God, and his power on that Gentlemans conscience; that he most kindly received *Mr VVishart*, and told him, his offer was welcome; and a little after, this visite was made so successful, upon *Mr VVishart's* instructing him and his family in the truth, that they publicly professed the same, and this worthy Gentleman evidenced his being truly taken by the heart; but sometime after, upon a snare laid for him by Cardinal *Beaton*, he was seized upon in the Laird of *Grange* his house, and thence carried prisoner to the castle of *Edenburgh*, and so hotly pursued by this wretched mans rage, who then was in his greatest power, that in a short time he was sentenced to dye; his Lady's being overwhelmed with grief, upon her husband's suffering and the forfeiture of that estate, having five sons, besides some daughters, to provide, did move him; but as one then much with God he with much confidence told her having

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gotten this assurance from that God for whom he suffered concerning his house and posterity that she had no cause to be troubled: for as to her outward case she should yet live to see the youngest of her sons in a better condition then he had been himself, which most clearly fell out, and is well known to many in this time: his second son went to France, was there raised to great honour, and upon his returning home, purchased a considerable estate, and was made Lord *Melvin*, and which calls for a remark, bought a part of the Cardinal's estate, the then great instrument of the present ruine of his house, which continues to this day. His third son was Lord *Tongland* as one of the judges of the *Seflion*, and an other of them Laird of *Halhill*, but, which was most strange, that the French King, (it seems moved from the great respect he had, to that worthy Gentleman *Sir Robert Melvin*, the second son formerly mentioned) did, upon some treaty with Scotland, press and procure the taking off the forfeiture of that estate of Raith, whereby the eldest son was also restored, and it is known to this day, in what a measure the Lord hath graciously witnessed his respect to that house and family which now is enjoyed by my *Lo Melvin* who as he is by a continued succession the descent of that worthy Gentleman who thus suffered for the truth, so it is hoped he shall be found walking in the steps of his truly renowned Antcestors who walked with God and adhered to his truth while forsaken and persecuted.

V I. I shall mention amongst their late instances a notable passage of an excellent man and deservedly of great repute in his time amongst the first restorers of the Gospel, and of learning in *Erance*, after the reformation, which grave and famous *Rivas* sets down in a letter of his to his brother. and is since his death printed in the French tongue; which relation I shall give to these who have not access to that book. It is this. *James Faber*, native of a steeple in *Piccardy*, a most faithful and eminent Minister of the Gospel there, did in the persecution of that time, flee with others, and

and for security retired to the Queen of Navarre, then in *Albret in Gascoine*, who had him in high esteem: on a certain day the Queen did advertise him, she purposed to come and dine at his house, and for that end did invite some learned men, in whose conference she took much delight: at dinner *Faber* became exceedingly sad, and now and then fell out in bitter weeping, at which the Queen complained, and inquiring the cause, why he wepted whilst she had come to be merry with him, he in the end said, most serene Queen, how can I be glad, or make others glad, who am as wicked a man as the earth bears. And what is that wickedness, sayes she, you have committed, who are known from your youth to have lived so holy? He answered I am now the age of an hundred years, free from the touch of any woman, and remembers not that I have committed what would burthen my conscience, or make me affraid to leave the world, except one sin, for which I am assured propitiation is possible, and as she pressed him to tell it, whilst he could scarce speak for abundance of tears, He said how can I stand before the throne of God, who having taught others in purity and sincerity, the holy Evangel of the Son of God, many of whom having followed my doctrine, have constantly suffered, a thousand torments and death it self, in the mean time I am unconstant Doctor, did flee; and though I had lived long enough, and should not have feared death, but rather desired it, did yet withdraw, and thus cowardly transgressed the command of my God. Whereupon the Queen, as she was most eloquent, did by reason and example shew him this had befallen others of the holy servants of God, and others there also, did adde such considerations as he became more chearful, and said there remains nothing, but that I go from hence to God, and after I have now made my Testament, I have that impression, I must delay no longer, knowing the Lord calls for me. After he fixed his eyes on the Queen, and sayes, Madam, I make you my heir and to your preacher *Gerard* I leave my Books; and my cloaths, and other things I have I leave to the poor; whereupon

whereupon the Queen smiling, asked, what then *Mr Faber* shall I have? The care, sayd he, Madam, to distribute this to the poor; it is well, said she I solemnly profess, this Legacie is more acceptable to me, then if the King my Brother, had named me his heir: thereafter they saw him more joyful, then he said, I have need of some rest, be you merry and joyful, and in the mean time adieu: and having spoke this, he turned him over on a bed that was near: where, as they judged, he lay sleeping, but was indeed fallen a sleep in the Lord, without the least signe of a previous indisposition, and when they were about to awake him, found him to their admiration dead; such was the end of this personage undoubitably holy, which the Queen of *Navarre* did her self relate to the Elector *Frederick* the second of *Palatine*, when he was sick at *Paris*, in his return from *Spain*, from the Emperour *Charles* the fyfth and it was communicated by a worthy Gentleman *Hubertus Thomas* a counsellor of the said *Fredericks* who was present at this relation of the Queens, from whom *Rivet* had it written by himself.

VII. I shall subjoine two passages worthy of observation, which concerne a grave and eminently godly Minister in the Church of Ireland *Mr Andrew Steward*, Minister at *Dunagor*, which together with some of these other remarkable instances here mentioned) were transmitted unto me from his worthy Son *Mr Andrew Steward*, Minister of *Donachadee*, who both knew the certainty of them, and was himself also a great observer of such confirmations of the truth; whom I cannot mention without sorrow at the remembrance of the late removal of so eminent and useful a Minister of *Jesus Christ*.

The first is an instance and evidence of the power and prevalency of prayer with God, on a Monday after a communion where a great multitude being gathered and these of the choicest of that countrey, whilst as a shepherd he was feeding his flock in a large place (for the numerousnesse of the hearers imposed a necessity upon him to preach in the

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held) an horrid black cloud and fearful to look on hang'd directly over their head, which to all present threatned a strange powring down of rain, whereby the exercise would have been interrupted; yea some drops were begun to fall, but Mr *Stewart* then at great advantage in his own spirit as to nearness with God begg'd their leave to retire a little from the place, and went to an other part for prayer, and while he prayed it was observably seen, that the cloud did remove half a mile off on the South hand, and there fell down in such a mighty rain, that albeit it was the heat of sommer the brooks so swelled that some coming too late to sermon could not have passage over, but where they were gathered there was not one drop more, so that he went on with a full gail to the close of the work, to the no small advantage and conviction of his hearers.

The next concerns his death baing called to the burial of that excellent man of God Mr *Josiah Welsh*, Son of that great man formerly mentioned who was his neighbour Minister, he stood sometime at the grave as a sad observer of such a thing, and to some who were by said, *Who knows who will be next?* But none answering, he said to them, I know, and thus turned away, and went home to *Dunagor* on his foot, and entering into the Church did bolt the doors, where he carryed some two hours, and after going to his house he fell a sleep on his bed with an excess of grief, whence he never in health rose again, but was buried that day moneth. When his Wife returned whom he had left with Mr *Welsh's* Widow, she inquired what he had been doing, to whom he said, I have been taking my leave of the Church of *Dunagor*, and I was there taking timber and stones to witness that in my short time I had laboured to be faithful and that according to my light, I have revealed the whole counsel to God to the People, (how great a testimony of the conscience was this) after a fourteen nights lying Mr *Ridge* a choise English Minister there came to visite him, and said, I hope Sir you do not now rew that ye have been faithful, he answered, I rew nothing but that I was too long in beginning (he mean'd his resisting, for several years,

years; a call to the ministry, to which he had been much pressed) and I will tel you a strange thing which hath helped me to be faithful, these last seven years there hath not one day passed me, without thoughts of death, and renewed submission to it, yea this made me neglect my body which should have served the Lord, as if it hath been mire in the street, which now troubleth me. That night when he dyed several godly and grave Christians were with him where for a long time he fell in a deep silence, which ended with heavy groanings often reiterated, at last a Christian there desired to know what troubled him, but he refused to tell, at last being urged he said. I shall tell you, my hair stands to behold, what I see coming on thir Lands (this was in the Year 1634.) and being further pressed he said, *the bloody wars of Germany shall never be ballanced with the wars of these three Kingdoms; What do you speak Sir, said one of the company, to whom he answered. The dead bodyes of many thousands who this day despise the glorious Gospel shall ly upon the earth as dung unburied, and whilst asked what then shall become of us and our posterity? He lifted up his voice, and said, He that is for the sword to the sword, he that is for captivity to captivity, and he that is for famine to famine, and God shall be avenged on these Lands, And whilst one said, Is there no remedy? He cryed thrice, No remedy; no remedy, no remedy; then he held his peace a little, and said, I tell you what must be, *The broken Covenant of Scotland must be renewed, the Formality of Ireland must be purged, the prodigality of England removed, and the sons of Saul must be hung up before the sun.* By which last word none knew what he mean'd. Some of his own Parish being present asked what he would say to them, to whom he replied, *Wo to thee Dunagor for the netles and the long grass shall be in greater plenty in thee then ever were people to hear the Word of God,* this the forementioned relater said, he was a witness to three years together after the late rebellion, they asked if he would have his children, he said no, he had done with them, and whilst they mentioned one of his daughters he desired to be foreborn, and said; *she should**

see glorious dayes after all this, and then takes his wife by the hand, (who having but a fourth night lyen in of child, crept out of the bed to get and give a long fairwell, to whom he said, Thou hast in faithfulness suffered many things with me in my pilgrimage, and now wherewith shall I comfort thee my love (think that he left her with four children, much debt contracted whilst he resisted a call to the ministry, and but 30 Shilling Sterling then to do all with) *a father to the fatherless, a judge to the widow is God in his holy habitation*, as God is God thou shalt never want nor none of thine, but in all the sad dayes that are coming you shall be a wonder of mercy in every place, whither you are carryed, and not a haire of your head shall fall, which was to the conviction and edification of many fully accomplished, which the forementioned relator does himself also attest, though with much humble modesty, because of his near relation.

VIII. This passage also I must instance of a remarkable providence to a grave and to this day famous Christian in our countrey *John Stewart* provost of *Aire*, who from his very young years did witness a respect to godliness, he had a considerable estate left him by his Father, but having so great a weight and impression on his spirit of the distress and straitened condition of many good people whom he knew in the countrey, and love to Jesus Christ, and his truth, having got the command over him, and all his interest, he did deliberately call them, as he had access, together in *Edinburgh*, and having spent some time in prayer, took their solemn promise, not to reveal while he lived, what he was to do; he said, he knew in what straits many of them were, to hold up the credite of the profession, and therefore he had brought a little money to lend each of them; yet so as they should never offer to repay it till he required the same, this was not known until his death, that some of these found themselves obliged to make it known. Sometime after he had bestowed this mony the plague having been sore in *Aire*, and trade much decayed, he him-

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self fell under some straits, and some of the prophane in that place, begun to make it their upcast, that Religion had made him poor, and his giving much to others like a fool, made him now want himself; the profession and the credite of it was alwayes this godly man's darling, which made him quite the countrey at that time, and borrowing a little money went over to *France*, that he might the better conceal his strait; when he came to *Rochel*, the salt and other commodities were become exceeding cheap, because there had been no trading of a long time, on which he adventured to fraught a ship, and loaden her upon credite; he himself came over the nearest to *England*, and thence to *Aire*, with expectation of the ships returne, but after long onwaicing he was informed for certaine, that his ship was taken with the *Turks*, which became matter of great exercise to him not because he knew not how to be abased, aswel as how to abound; but, fearing lest the mouths of wicked men, might so much the more on this occasion be opened to reproach the profession, that for many dayes he kept his chamber; at last a maid who had heard amongst the people that *John Stewart's* ship was arrived in the roade came running and cryed at the door that his ship was come; but he being at prayer, could not be moved from his Master's company, till he was satisfied, and then went forth & saw it was a truth; but as a further ground of present exercise to him a worthy Christian and great intimat of his *John Kennedy*, who for joy had gone forth in a smal boat to the ship, by the sudden falling down of a storme was carried by the ship & in the judgement of all that looked on, he and the boat were swallowed up, yea the storme increased at that rate that they feared the loss of the ship also; which did so deeply affect this gracious man, that for three dayes he could be seen by none, under the weight of such a trial; but at last, having gone forth to visite the widow (as then supposed) whilst with that family they were mutually witnessing grief, *John Kennedy* immediatly comes in, who had not been cast away, but by a strange providence the boat had been driven a far way to another place of the coast:

here at once many mercies did meet, he vended the commodities of the ship, which having payed all his debt, returned him twentie thousand merks more to himself: thus was that bread cast upon the waters, and to appearance lost, after many dayes returned, and that witnessed *that by liberal devices the liberal man doth stand*. I must add a word upon the death of this worthy man, whilst then his friends came to see him, he oft used this word, *be humble*, and anent his own case, he said, I go the way of all flesh, and it may be some of you doubt nothing of my welbeing; yea I testify that except when I slept, or was on business, I was not these ten years without thoughts of God, so long as I could be in going from my house to the cross, and yet I doubt my self, and am in great agonie, yea at the brink of despair; but a day or two before he dyed he turned his face to the wall, from company, for two houres, and then Mr John Fergusson came in, a grave and godly Minister of that place, who asked what he was doing, upon which he turned himself, with these words, I have been fighting and working out my salvation, with fear and trembling, and now I blese God it is perfected, sealed, confirmed, and all fears are gone.

It is a memorable instance known yet to many in the north of Ireland of a choise and godly gentlewoman when the rebellion brake up there, who fled with some other persons with her and three children one of them upon the breast, they had not gone far, till they were striped naked by the Irish, who to admiration spared their lives (it is like thinking the cold and hunger would kill them) afterwards, going on, at the foot of a river which runs in to Locheach, others met them, and will have them cast in to the river; but this godly woman not dismayed, asked a little liberty to pray, and as she lay naked on the frozen ground, got resolution not to go on her own feet to such an unjust death, upon which having called her and she refusing, was dragged by the heels along that rugged way to be cast in, with the rest of her company; but she then turned and on her knees says, you should, I am sure, be Christians, and men

men I see you are; in taking away our miserable lives you
 do us a pleasure; but know, that as we never wrong'd you,
 nor yours, you must remember to dye also yourselves, and
 one day give an account of this cruelty to the judg of heaven
 and earth, on which an irish priest then present, said, let
 us not take their lives, but we will put them into this Island
 of the lake, a boat being at the river all the eight naked and
 without meat are turned into that Island, where after four
 dayes staying, some of the company dyed for hunger, and
 cold, but not this woman or any of her children; for she
 lived by faith, upon the word of God and not by bread
 only: a day after, the two boys having crept aside, found
 the hide of a beast, which had been killed, at the root of a
 tree, which the mother and they endeavoured to get cast
 over them then lying upon the snow: the next day a little
 boat goes by, unto whom she calls, for Gods sake to take
 her out; but they being Irish would not, she desired a
 little bread, they said they had none, then she begs a coal
 of fire, which she obtained, for she had seen smook in the
 boat, and thus with some fallen chips made a little fire,
 and the boyes taking a piece of the hide laid it on the coals,
 and began to gnaw the leather, but without an extraordi-
 nary divine support what could this do? Thus they lived
 ten dayes without any visible mean of help, and that good
 woman professed it was by faith and joy in God, that she
 did live; nor had she any bread but ice or snow, nor drink
 except water; but she thought God put more substance
 into it, and found it as it were clammy, the next day a
 boat carried her out, to the side of the Band water, where
 she had yet been lost, but that she could not suffer to see
 her children dye in her sight, and though the two boyes
 were young and so starved that they had no strength, she
 pressed them to go out of her sight, under pretence of seek-
 ing some fire, and bids them hold their face to such an airth,
 where in that desolate countrey she knew they could have
 no fire, yet in such an extreme left room for God to work
 their safety: the poor children were not able and had not
 gone far till they saw two or three great dogs eating a man

who had been killed, the children were affraid at the sight of the dogs (who needed not fear any thing but to live in such a condition) and one of them came running and leaped upon one of the children without doing him the last hurt, but fawned on them, and would run a little before, and then tarry till the children came up, and so led them on to a house where smoak appeared, which was an Irish man's protected by the English in *Antrum*, by whose means they were marvellously preserved, and the mother sent for and succoured by a party from *Antrum*. I would shut this passage up with something truly observable anent this gentlewoman's husband, who was a sweet humoured Gentleman, and godly, and one who used to frequent that famous Friday's meeting at *Antrum* before that rebellion brake up; but being insnared by some Arminians then in the bounds, the worthy Ministers in that place, after some pains taken on him, could not prevail, *Mr Blair* being there, had this word to a friend who told it to a godly Minister in that place from whom I had this passage. *I am of opinion that this Gentleman, shall either turn penitent or mad before many dayes.* Which fell out, for he fell so furiously mad that they were driven to the necessity of binding him, and thus for a year continued, though with some more sober intervals, and then would bewail his case, at the end of the year, being very furious, he was taught of the devil, but by an overreaching providence of God, to feign himself sober, and intreated his wife to be rid of the manacles, which was done; but at the break of day rising took the coverlet of the bed about him, and went with resolution to drown himself in the river; but when he was at the brink thereof, had this suggested to him, he was a fool to drown the covering, for it might be useful which made him go a little back, and lay it down at the root of a tree, and then with full resolution went to throw himself in; but this was suggested to him again at the very brink, were it not best to pray, before I dye? On which he turned a little and falls down to prayer; but ere he had done, his wit and judgement was returned, with peace of conscience, and assurance of pardon, in as large

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large measure as ever he enjoyed these in his life; and thus returned in a sober frame to the astonishment of his wife.

IX. There is a strange passage of judgement that amongst the memorable things of the providence of God I think worthy of inserting, it concernes a Noble man in our own countrey, whose name with respect to his house, I forbear to mention, who for many years by blood, cruelty and oppression, made himself a terror in that place of the countrey where he lived. One day his second son, who after succeeded to that house, by the death of his brother, found a letter sealed and directed to his father, bearing the stile of his house, and without any suspicion whence it came carried it up to his chamber, which, that Lord breaking up, found of a strange stile for it had these words, I summond you ——— to appear before the tribunal of God, and there answer for your murders, oppressions, &c. *Subscribitur Diabolus*; upon which, he being enraged, drew his sword to have run his son thorow, supposing it a contrived business by him, but he escaped and was forced for many moneths to withdraw from the house; but upon the intercession of friends his father did condescend to admit him again, but that very day whilst they were met on this account, that noble man washing his hands in his bedchamber, and one of his servants by a letter from the roof of that chamber drops down upon his hands, sealed and directed as before, which being opened had the very same words of the former letter with that dreadfull subscription *Diabolus*, after which by immediat stroke of the Lords hand, he was stricken with a remarkable insatiation, and such an horror & fear upon his conscience, that upon the appearance of the least boy, he would have fled, and with howling sought, to have sheltered himself under a bed, and in this case shortly dyed, having been made a terror to himself, and the meanest person in case to quash him, who made it his work to be terrible to others in his life, this (far from reflecting upon the house or family) with respect to the holding forth the holy and righteous

Judgment of the Lord I could not omit to insert the same after some safe warrant as to the certainty thereof from the Lord I had ground to believe. (¶)

SEVENTH Witnes to this truth, that the Lord hath in so solemn, and extraordinary a way appeared for his Church in these last times, is this, *These great, and marvellous providences (which we may call Magnalia Dei) by which he hath witnessed his truth, and confirmed the same since the breaking up of the Gospel in this late raising of the Church from Antichrist*; For we may truly say there hath not wanted any visible attestation from Heaven, and a convincing testimony, by some great workes of the Lord, to his truth, as well as in the primitive times of the Church.

We do here understand by such providences, these where in man cannot but see something above nature and natural causes, yea, above the ordinary way of the Lords working, which doth evidently witness his great, and immediate hand, some whereof have been so wonderful, which can be instanced in these late times, as might truly be called miracles; it is true this is not the Lords usual way, neither maketh he use of such a solemn testimony, but on special, and weighty grounds, when the necessity of the Church calleth for it, whilest he is about some extraordinary piece of work, or when the Gospel cometh first to a land that hath been long overspread with darknes, when ordinary means of conviction are wanting, or in times of great opposition, when the commission of his Servants needeth some extraordinary seal; in such a time as that of Achabs, when the People are made to halt betwixt truth, and a false way, and thus we finde the Lord did confirm the first breaking up of the Gospel, and make use of such a mean to spread the Christian Church through the World, and should this seem strange that in so great a change of the Churches case now in the latter dayes, when he was to raise her up, after so long a ruin, and desolation, whilest Antichristianisme so many ages had overspread the face of the World, that he should thus appear, and give some signal demonstration

of his power in behalfe of his People, such as we have seen with our eyes, and our Fathers did tell us.

It is not miracles, or any extraordinary providence on which men should resolve their faith, nor do we here mention these, for laying stresse thereon in believing the truth, no, the Protestant doctrine, and cause doth lean on a stronger ground, it can with confidence appeal the adversary to the Scripture, these divine records which they do not pretend to deny, this, even this is the reason of our hope, which we offer to all that ask for the same; and there let the God of truth who hath revealed his will, and answers men by the written word be judg, and we shall demand no greater advantage, nor justice at the hand of our enemies; we know miracles cannot authorize a lye, or be a seal to anything repugnant to the Scripture, and truly these lying wonders which have been so frequent in the World, which the Apostle doth foretel that such an engine the Devil will make use of, to turn men aside from the truth, besides other marks of their falsehood, they have this one most discernable, that they are the support and warrant of that which cannot stand alone by the Word; and thence are the Popish miracles made use of to confirm such tenets which of all their doctrine do most directly contradict the Scripture, as the merit of works, purgatory, praying for the dead, &c. But as we will not boast of such, as the authority, or proof of our doctrine, so we judg it a grave, and a concerning duety to observe the wondrous works of the Lord in our times, yea, to make a diligent search thereanent, that we may tell posterity some of these great acts of our God, for his Church, in bringing her again from Babel.

I would desire to be very tender, and cautious upon such a subject, for I judg it horrid divinity to make a lye for God; it is not the truth, but a false way which requireth such a help, and truly anent these following instances, which are but a few of many that might be brought if there were more serious enquiry, I dare attest the Lord, the great witnes that I have not knowingly set down here any

any thing false, yea, not without some diligent search and satisfying grounds anent the certainty thereof. I judge it not necessary to repeat these which are so known already to the World from publick records, and therefore shall but briefly point at some of these, and adde a few more particular instances of this kinde, which I may with some confidence bring to the light, from clear evidences of the truth thereof.

I shall first mention that solemn testimony of *Mr Bayne* in Queen Maryes time who in the midst of the fire, whilest his body was all in a flame, his armes and legs halfe burnt, cryed out to bystanders, *O Papists, ye look after miracles, lo here is one. I am now burning in this fire, but feels no more pain then if I were in a bed of roses*, O must not this be called a miracle, and an extraordinary seal from the Lord, to his truth, wherein the World would consider, this was the testimony of one, who was upon the borders of eternity, which he did declare before a great multitude, attested by *Mr Fox* that holy servant of Christ who in things of that kinde so extraordinary was most cautious, and did much search out the truth, and certainty of what he sets down, and by him was published whilest many of that time, who might have been present were alive, yea, it is the more remarkable, the sharp combat that this Martyr had through the terrour of fire a little before his death, fearing he should never be able to endure the same.

What a remarkable providence was that at a town in the Low Countryes, whilest some of the Saints were put to death, by the Popish party, and among these one *Michael Bomboutius* a Deacon of the reformed Church, whilest they were going to suffer about midday the Heavens being most clear, there came suddenly so great a darknes, and so horrible, and unusual a tempest which was onely in that place & above that city discerned, that men were generally shaken with fear, thinking there should be a present dissolution of the World; this famous *Votius* in that piece *de signis*, doth witnes that from divers there present even some of them popish he had this related to himself, and as he sayeth,

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At a town Alfa in Westflanders whilst a godly man
whom the Inquisition there had pursued, was leading to the
stake, and was by the way singing Psalmes, the Captain of
these who guarded him was so enraged, that he caused pre-
sently his tongue be plucked out by the rootes, but lo a few
moneths after, this wretched man hath a Childe born with

his tongue hanging out a great way, which by no meanes
could be kept with in his mouth, this Doctor Hall being
himselfe afterwards in that town had shewed him from
some who were most considerate there, as he sets down
in his Epistles.

Charles the IX. of France who was author of that horrid
Massacre where the blood of many thousand Protestants
at Paris, and other parts was shed, did a very little after
dye in the strength of his yeares, by an extraordinary effu-
sion of blood from all passages of his body, that as Du
Serres, and other french writers of that time do shew he
was made to wallow in his own blood before his death. O
was not this the very finger of God, a most convincing
stupendious piece of his judgement?

What an extraordinary providence was that which is
attested by divers witnessses thereto, in the late bloody
Massacre of Ireland; a young woman who by the Irishes
was stript almost naked, and after by one of them threatned
that except she would give him her money, he would forth-
with run her through, to which she gravely answered; I
know you cannot kill me except God give you leave,
whereupon he did three times with his sword run at her
naked body, but could not once pierce her skin, which did
so confound this wretched man, that with a kinde of horreur
he went away and ceased to trouble her further.

Did not God wonderfully appear in the raising of the
late King of Sweden, with that astonishing successe, which
did attend him in breaking the power of the house of Au-
stria, whilst they were at so great an height, and had their
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hands not reeking in the blood of the Protestants throughout Bohemia, and other places of Germany, O but the Lord's hand might be clearly seen in acting forth; and fitting that party of the Swedes, for such a piece of his service, even in a more then ordinary way, who like that he Goat mentioned in Daniel did come so swiftly that they touched not the ground, as it were; but like a mighty speare bare down all before them.

The breaking of that great Spanish Armado in the Year 88. which had been 3 years in contriving, did convincingly witnes a divine hand opposing the same, and how remarkable was that issue of all the Counsels, expence, and cruelty, which Philip the second had made use of to bear down the rising of the Gospel in the Netherlands; for it is notour that after many essayes, the losse of an 100 Millions of gold, with near 400000 Lives, the reckoning of all his gain, and purchase was only the losse of a considerable part of these countreyes, and helping forward the establishment of the united Provinces; and truely we must say the Lord did by his great, and outstretched hand wonderfully appear in raising that Common wealth, so that they may date their flourishin in outward interest from their owning of the interest of God. Religion did raise them and no People this day hath more cause, and are under greater engagements to be zealous for the truth, and defence of the Protestant Cause.

The breaking of that formidable league of the Catholiks in France for rooting out the Protestant Religion there was very wonderful, how all their Counsels, and designs should resolve in their own ruin, so that the most ordinary onlookers, could not but see a divine hand counteracting the same: Davila though an adversary, in setting down that history, giveth a large account of this.

What a great appearance of the Lords hand, yea, of an extraordinary providence, was there in the throwing down of the Popish images, and altars, almost in one night throw much of the Netherlands, which for so many 100 yeares had been made use of for idolatry. O did not Satan thus

thus fall as lightning from Heaven, it being very evident how strange an impulse did carry out the People in this, over all difficulties, or fear of hazard, what a wonderful consent and agreement amongst places so remote about one thing, and almost at one time; how quickly also was it executed though these Provinces almost in an instant, the authors did never appear, nor any noise of their boasting thereanent; and which was strange the Magistrates of the cities, having both power and will to hinder, yet were so overruled and struck with astonishment, that they could not resist; and as *Famianus Strada* a great enemy to the truth doth shew what fell out in Antwerp, and other places, considering the greatnes of the work, the multitude, and height of these idolatrous monuments it might have been enough for many dayes, what was done in one night, and yet not any in the least prejudged or hurt thereby, which made him cry out, that sure this was the work of the Devil, and his help eminently therein: but I do not wonder, to hear these in such a manner blaspheme, whilst they are tormented with so clear a discovery of Gods hand against them.

Must we not here mention that great deliverance of the town of Leyden from the Spanjard, with a special remark, whilst it was then manifest, if the enemy had made use of Cannon in battering the wals, they could not have come short of their designe: in what an extraordinary way also were the winds trysted to raise the waters in order to the towns relief, when they were at the utmost extremity, yea for driving the waters back again, when the town was once delivered, and which was very marvellous, that the same night, wherein the Spanjards were forced to retire, a part of the wals fell down, which if it had fallen out a litle before, that city had been utterly lost. O was not this a divine hand, which even the greatest Atheists, and such who judge things to fall out by chance, must confesse?

What wonderful providences did attend the actings of that poor handful of protestants in the Valleyes of Piemont, for

for their necessary selfe defence; Fox with other writers give a clear account in setting down that horrid persecution which they endured in the year 1555. I shall here only touch some passages mentioned by Mr Morland in his History, who upon the account of that bloody Massacre, which was there within these few years, was there near that place, and from sure knowledge, and information doth very gravely hold forth the same; and truly they are providences so marvellous, and astonishing, that men cannot but see the Lord in an extraordinary way helping that poore People, his acting forth a few to do such exploits, beyond any thing that can be mentioned of these great Heroes, whom the World in former yeares did admire; so that we must say, as this was a convincing proof of the great power of God, put forth for his People when help in an ordinary way failed, it was also a solemn testimony to their cause, and of the Lords approbation of his Peoples standing for their own defence against the cruelty, and violence of a persecuting Magistrat. We have there held forth, how after that bloody persecution by an order from the Duke of Savoy, a small number was in a remarkable way raised up, and upon their first essay 7 or 8 under the conduct of that worthy Gentleman *Josue Gianavell*, (whom God made use of as a choise instrument, to help that poor scattered remnant) was made to fight 300 souldiers who were sent to exerce further cruelty in that place, killing many of them and persueing the rest for a considerable time. After, a party of 500 being sent by the Marquise of Pianeza who then commanded the Duke of Savoyes forces, were opposed by 11 of the Protestants, and other 6 with slings, and after a short conflict were forced to flee with considerable slaughter the terror of the Lord upon the one, and a spirit of courage and resolution in the other being very manifest. After these, there was an other party sent forth of 700 souldiers to sease on all the passages, upon which about 17 Masters of families, whose hearts God had in signal manner strengthened to the battel, for their poor brethrens preservation, resolved to cast themselves

elves upon the Lord for the successe of their undertakings, and with such marvellous boldnes faced their adversaries as put them in amazement and made them draw off, resolving to take another way, but were still pursued by this little handful, who killed many without the losse of one man. At an other time the Protestants there joyning in a greater number, being 300 under the conduct of the forementioned Captain *Gianavel* were assaulted by 1500 of the adversaries, but the Lord so ordered that this little party getting the advantage of the place, after some conflict did force them to retire, pursuing them into the woods, and steep rocks with great slaughter, and thus with a marvellous courage in a continued fight for eight houres together, did drive the enemy before them; Divers other remarkable passages of this kinde, are at more length mentioned in that History which the Author after most exact search, and enquiry thereanent, doth solemnly attest, and truely it might be much cause for wonder as it is there observed that through the Lords eminent appearance, and his blessing on his poor Peoples endeavours, for the interest of Religion, and their own preservation they did in a short time dispute the matter with such a prosperous successe, against all the forces; which the Duke of Savoy sent, that their enemies at last began to fear what effect it might produce, and therefore having no better game to play, were glad by a treaty of peace, to get the sword out of their hands, how ever they pretended it as a complement, put on neighbouring Princes, who did interceed for the same.

Have we not also to reckon among the great workes of the Lord in these last times, Henry the VIII. of England most violent in opposition to the truth, who by the Pope was stiled Defender of the faith upon that account, and for his writing against Luther, and yet the same man shall be the instrument made use of by the Lord, to throw down Pope, and his power in his Dominions, and give some beginning to a great Reformation of the Church there.

Vergerius, the Popes Nuncio, for many years in Germany, whilst he is writing against the truth, is even then converted, and forced to yeeld to the power of the same, turns Protestant, and a zealous Preacher of the Gospel to his death.

Galeacius Carraceolus, an Italian Marquise of great place, and estate in the World, was so taken by the heart with one word, in hearing Peter Martyr, as made him quite not only all his hopes of preferment, a most pleasant place as was in the earth, and a great inheritance, but to go over the belly of the most pressing intreaties, and insinuations of his friends, the weeping cries of his Lady, and Children, and go to a strange place quitting all, that he might preserve his conscience, and enjoy fellowship with the Church. O what a solemn witnes was this to the truth, and of the conquering power of Christ!

And in a word what a marvellous thing was is that poor Luther, against whom so much of the World was aloft, with greatest rage and violence, should yet live to an old age, and go to the grave in peace. And truly the Spirit and appearance, of this great, and first witnes to the truth might be a convincing evidence, that the Lord was then to raise up a People to himselfe in whom he would he glorified, by an active testimony, as well as by suffering.

Besids these instances I would here mention some remarkable providences worthy indeed to be observed, though they are little known to the World, which we may say doth not only witnes the power of God but are a convincing seal to his truth, and the Churches Reformation in these last times.

It is a remarkable passage which worthy Mr *Forbes* sets down under his hand, whilst he was banished for the truth; whose words are these. In the year 1607. being at Ruan in France, and meeting with *Monfieur Figureus* that auncient, and famous divine, and then Pastor of the Reformed Church in that city, he had from him this following relation: After the close of the Council of Trent in the time of Pius the V. there was a consultation in

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Italy by the Pope, and Cardinals, for an utter extirpation of the Reformed Churches in Europe; and to this end every Prince of the Romish Religion had a certain part designed where this great project should be put in practice: The death of Pius the V. hindered a present prosecuting of this design. And his successor Gregorius XIII. did suffer it to ly dead having no heart that way, and so until that time of Clemens VIII. it was not revived, but then this bloody resolution was of new ratified by him, and his Cardinals under their hands, and seals; the onely difficulty was in this, to find a fit, and trusty person whom they should make use of to the Princes of the Romish Religion, for engaging them to subscribe the said ordinance, and set about the execution thereof: At length a Gentleman of good parts, near in blood to the Cardinal Baronius is choised which to him was a matter of much grief, and sorrow, for unknown to them he was of the Reformed Religion, but this grief in his countenance, and carriage, put his friends who observed the same to strange thoughts, and so much the more, that he did expressly declare to some of these who asked thereanent, that what to them seemed a cause of rejoycing, was to him a just occasion of grief, yet at last finding his hazard, upon a bitter challenge from the foresaid Cardinal who had heard thereof, he judged it his wisdom to dissemble, shewing him his unsuitableness to so great an employment could not but be ground of trouble, and fear; and so was someway forced to engage, getting his commissions, the decree of the Conclave, with letters to the foresaid Princes, sealed, and subscribed: But so whilst this poor Gentleman is on his journey, having found wayes to free himself of his servants, and other company, his spirit was in great perplexity betwixt these two grievous temptations, either to be instrument of utter ruin to the truth, and Churches of Christ, or forsake his countrey, inheritance and all he had in the World, upon which he resolved to retire himself out of the high way to an obscure village, where for three dayes he gave himself to fasting and prayer for direction, and resolution from the

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Lord, and after this had his heart so strengthened against the care of his worldly estate, that he resolved to forsake all, and to reveal this bloody conspiracy to the Churches of Christ, and cast himself on Gods hand for his future estate, so that he turned his face from Spain, and took journey to France, and to Paris, where at that time remained the sister of Henry the III. a Religious Princeesse, afterwards Dutchesse of Lorraine to whom the foresaid Monsieur Figureus was her preacher, and unto him made his addresse (though after divers refusals of admission upon suspicion) shewing him the whole buſsines, and delivered the sealed decree with his letters of commission for that effect, and did likewise shew him (who was then astonished at such a wonderful providence of God, in fostering some of his own Children in the midst of Babylon, and that to so comfortable an use for his Churches safety) that there were many others in Italy, yea, in Rome it self of the Reformed Religion, who had their secret meetings, and even Gregory the XIII. before his advancement to the Papacy, was throughly clear thereanent in his judgement, whereof he gave him divers evidences: This foresaid relation did so affect Mr Forbes that he shewed his marvellous desire to see that man who had done so worthy, and gracious a work for the glory of God and good of his Church, and by a recommendation from Monsieur Figureus, he did afterwards go of set purpose to that place, taking the first opportunity for Heidelberg, where this Gentleman was then retired for his further security, and honourably entertained by that Prince, where he sheweth that he saw him, and from his own mouth received the assurance of this former narration to his great satisfaction, and comfort: This is the very summe which I have here set down and truly transcribed off the principle, which I had beside me, both written, and subscribed by Mr Forbes his own hand.

A remarkable providence I shall also here set down, which did tryſt with some very convincing circumstances, at the Parliament 1621. at their bringing in of Popish

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Ceremonies upon the Church, which was then a sad step of the lands defection from the truth, contraire to their engagements; whilst the faithful Ministers of Jesus Christ at that time did with greatest seriousness and freedome obtest, and warn these who were in power (alace, that now there is litle of such a Spirit appearing) that they would not, to please men corrupt the Worship of God, but the speat being violent, it did at last resolve in a Law; at which very time, whilst the Kings Committioner did rise from the throne to ratify this woeful act, by the touch of the Scepter, was even in this moment of that ratification trysted by the God of Heaven, with an extraordinary lightning, and very unusual great claps of thunder, and these followed with a most strange, and extraordinary darknes, which both for the suddainnes, and greatnes of the same did astonish, and affright all who were present, and after all, so violent a downpowring of rain, as made the streets to run like a river, imprisoning the Lords within that house for an houre and an half; and truly as we are not hereon to lay stresse, or be peremptory in the application of particular providences, yet this was so very convincing as should not be passed without a special remark, considering first how at that time many of the choise Ministers of the Land, were together near the town, at fasting, and prayer, bewailing before the Lord such an avowed defection from the truth. 2. That likewise this horrid tempest, and darknes appeared to these who were at some distance, to be most directly above the town, the darknes overshadowing that part onely, and was not so in other places. 3. That they had by the instigation of the Prelats, guarded the entry to the Parliament that day, lest any Ministers should have entred a protestation in behalf of the Church against these Articles, and thus thought themselves secure from any opposition of that kinde; but whilst they least suspected, they are met with a more publick, and visible witnes from Heaven against the same. 4. Which was also most strange upon the Monday following, whilst these acts were proclaimed,

claimed, the Heavens did in the same manner, put on darknes with a most fearful tempest of thunder lightning and rain, which continu'd all the time of their reading at the Crosse. And truly when the Lord thus doubled his warnings it might cry aloud for mens observation thereof.

The breaking of that journey to New England which about the year 1636. was seriously intended by some of the choise Ministers in Ireland, who were then much persecuted by the Prelates, though not from any fear of their own sufferings, but with a respect to a further liberty to serve the Lord in the work of the Gospel, when the door was shut upon them in their own countrey: This was truly a strange, and remarkable providence, and their preservation in some kind miraculous, anent which their circumstances are worthy to be observed. 1. That whilest their vessel amidst a tempestuous sea, and far from any land, was like a riddle with so many laces; yea, the rudder of the Ship breaking, so that the Pilots were turn'd wholly hopelesse, and could not see any ground of safety in an ordinary way, a poor seaman by a remarkable providence, whose company they had much shunned was made the instrument of preserving the whole vessel, with a marvellous dexterity fastening the rudder, which others had given over, as one visibly sent by the Lord for that end. 2. The strong perswasion that some of these worthy Ministers had of their safety, which with great confidence they declared before the passengers, whilest the Master and others were giving it over as a hopelesse businesse, and seeing a convincing necessity for a return though it was very astonishing, and bitter at the first look, yet was afterwards followed with a clear discovery from the Lord, as one of them with much freedom did expresse his assurance to the rest of his brethren, that since the Lord would not accept their service in America, they should not want work, and service, whither he was sending them back by so remarkable a providence, as within a short time was evident; the downfal of the Prelats in Scotland and after

in Ireland tryſting ſhortly upon the back thereof, ſo that it may be ſaid this was a convincing preſage thereof, the Lord by a ſtrong hand bringing back ſuch choiſe, and uſeful inſtruments for that great harveſt which did after follow, ſo that they could not but ſay, the Lord did in a very marvellous, and immediat way appear in that croſſe wind, and ſtorm, and thereby as it with an audible voice did witneſs his minde in ſuch a diſappointment. 3. It was alſo moſt obſervable that none of theſe who on the account of their conſciences, that they might enjoy the purity of the ordinances, went in that journey was the worſe, but had a ſafe return, only ſome perſons who upon another account, expecting a fat ſoil, and outward advantage in that place, and had unexpectedly ſlipt in the veſſel, did all dye upon the ſea ſave one being 5 in number, and it was alſo wonderful upon their return how the Lord as he had ſtayed the rage of the ſea, did alſo ſtill the tumults of People, which they found by experience, ſo that it did evidently give a daſh, and became a terrour to their adverſaries.

I muſt here alſo ſet down a very ſingular, and ſtrange inſtance, we may ſay both of judgement and mercy which was in this land, not many years ago, a Gentleman whoſe ſtyle was *Waſtrow* a moſt bloody man, and otherwayes notour for proſanity, but moſt in this, that it was his great work, and pleaſure to put difference betwixt men, and as it was at that time very eaſy to engage them in blood, whileſt he had thus ſtirred up a neighbour Gentleman to killan other in that place, finding him after ſore troubled in mind thereanent, he told him more of that praſtice would be the beſt cure, for he himſelf had killed 6, and that the firſt time he was much diſquieted but the longer he did continue, it became the more eaſy. But one day whileſt he was on ſuch an account riding to a place where two had tryſted to decide a privat quarrel by fighting, his horſe ſtumbles on the ſide of a ſteep rock, and he falls a great way down, his ſword falling out before him, yet without any hurt; and here by ſuch a ſtrange piece of provi-

dence did the Lord tryft and break in upon his conſcience, ſo that he quits his journey, turns home with great trouble and remorſe, a moſt kindly change following thereon, and for ſome yeares after witneſſed much tendernes and repentance by his after walk, ſpent much time alone mourning before his death, and that day he dyed having no viſible appearance thereof to theſe who looked on, he was heard in his chamber at much wreſtling in prayer, and after long continuance, theſe of the houſe were forced to break up the door, getting no anſwer after long knocking, they find him dead in the room, but upon his knees in a praying poſture; & the whole blood of his body, which from every paſſage thereof had iſſued out, ſweeming about him in the floore; it being viſible how all theſe paſſages were opened for that effect, a moſt aſtoniſhing inſtance, declaring this to the World, though He pardon the iniquity of his People, yet ſome ſins he will not let paſſe without a viſible mark of his anger, but will take vengeance on their inventions.

What an obſervable paſſage is that alſo, known to many yet alive, anent a notorious robber in the ſouth parts of this land, called *John of the Score* who for many years having driven that woeful trade, did one day rencounter a poor man travelling with two horſes which he according to his cuſtome takes away, the poor countryman falling down on his knees, did earneſtly beg, that for Jeſus Chriſt ſake, he would give the one again, for he had no more to maintain his poor family, but what he could gain by them, but it was in vain, he carrieth them home with him, leaving the poor man in that deſolate condition, but a little after, he turns dumpiſh, and melancholy, could get no reſt, or quiet, nor knowing the cauſe, but as he profeſſed, that theſe words the poor man had ſpoke to him, (though he was ſo great an Atheiſt, that he underſtood not what he meant when he ſpoke of Chriſt) were lying like a heavy weight upon his ſpirit, and whileſt he was ſought after for his robberies he deſired his ſonnes to ſhift for themſelves, for he could not go out of the way, there

conscience, there being a restraint upon him, and something within him that in a kinde bound him from going out of the way, and thus stayed at his house until he was apprehended, brought in to Edinburgh, and there put up in prison, upon which a godly Minister *Mr Henry Blyth* with a Christian Gentleman *William Cuninghame Tutor of Boniton*, who had sometimes known him, makes a visit, holding forth to him his miserable estate, and the hazard of his soul, (for he was judged by the Law to dye) and amongst other words, shewing him the necessity to flee to Jesus Christ, he doth suddenly break out with a cry, *O what word is that, for it hath been my death, that is the word that hath lyen upon my heart since the poor man spake it to me; so that I had no power from that time to go out of the my, and after being told what an one Christ was without whom he could not be saved, he cryeth: O will he ever look to me, and shew mercy that for his sake would not shew mercy to that poor man, and give him back his horse, but after further instruction, a most real, and gracious change did appear upon him, he gave most convincing evidences of the reality thereof, attained to great assurance before his death, and upon the scaffold in the publick streets where he was executed did speak so wonderfully of the Lords dealing with him, and with such knowledge, and judgement, as left a conviction on all present, and forced them to see a truth, and reality in the grace of God.*

An other notable instance of grace, with a very remarkable passage in his condition, I shall here mention, one *Patrick Mackelwarth*, who lived in the West parts of Scotland, whose heart the Lord in a remarkable way touched, and after his conversion, as he shewed to many of his Christian friends, was in such a frame so affected with a new World wherein he was entred, the discoveries of God, and of a life to come, that for some moneths together he did scarce ever sleep but was still taken up in wondring, his life was very remarkable for tenderesse, and near converse with God in his walk, and which was worthy to be noticed, one day after a sharp tryal, having his

only son suddenly taken away by death he retired alone for several houres, and when he came forth did look so cheerfully that to those who asked him the reason thereof, and wondered at the same in such a time, he told them he had got that in his retirement with the Lord, that to have it afterwards renewed he would be content to losse a sleep every day. This one remarkable passage I would set down, it had been long his burden the want of memory that he could retain almost nothing of what he heard from the word, and bitterly complaining thereof to worthy Master *James English* Minister of Daly, his counsel to him was when he heard any truth which he desired to remember, to hold it up to the Lord, and desire him to keep it for him, and give him it back according to his need, which accordingly this blessed Man did with much seriousness practice, and on his death bed, to his Minister, and divers Christians that were present, he did solemnly declare how wonderfully the Lord had answered, and condescended to him in that particular, for as they knew how much formerly it had been his burden, the want of memory, now the Lord had given him back all these truths that he had put in his keeping, so that what for many yeares before he had heard was now most clearly brought to his remembrance, which he witnessed by repeating many particular truths, and notes of Sermons which at such times he had heard.

Now to shut up this, we have truely cause to say even from late experience, since this dark night came upon the Church in these Nations, with so sharp a storm of persecution, there hath not wanted some very signal, and convincing providences witnessing the Lords appearance for his People, and against their enemies, which are worthy of a remark, and may let men see that there is one higher then the highest, who ruleth in the Kingdomes of the Children of men, for it is manifest.

1. How eminently the Lord did appear in breaking that party who had been the great instruments both in Counsel, and Action to break the government of the Church of Christ in this land, and lay so much of his vine-

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yeard waste, and desolate, and this, in the height of their power, and greatnes, whilst they seemed most firmly rooted. O how evident was a divine hand there, that this Cabbal who made it their great work to raise up Prelacy, and oppresse the poor Church, and like a violent tempest did carry all before them, in a moment, when they could have least expected, should be made to fall, yea, in so short a time be turned out of their places, and offices, who but a little before had turned out so many of the faithful Ministers of Christ; and that great man, who put forth his power and authority so much to turn many of the godly of the Land doth Ministers and others, out of their houses and families, tossing them from place to place, should thus be dealt with from the Lord, and recompened with that measure, being forced to quite his lodging once, and again, yea even to banish himself out of the countrey, who had been the chief instrument to banish some of the most choise servants of Christ, and this stroke also made to tryst them from that hand whence they could have least expected, whose interest they studied to promote in opposition to Gods; I should desire to study sobriety, and fear in application of the judgements of God, but when the Lord doth so clearly reveal himself and shew forth such an evident resemblance, betwixt mens sin, and their stroke, I think it cries aloud for a serious observing thereof.

2. Should we passe without a remark, so solemn a witness from the Lord of his respect to his Peoples sufferings in this late time? for it is known, with what marvellous resolution, and chearfulness, these have been carried through, who were called forth to resist unto the blood in their adherence to the truth, witnessing to the conviction of onlookers even their greatest enemies, something above Roman Gallantry, yea, something above nature in that stayednes and elevation of their Spirits, and as some of all ranks in the land the Lord would have brought forth to seal, and witness his truth, and the work of Reformation, so it hath been also clear, that none wanted a large measure of support, and strength for the tryal, their suffering still giving a further dash to their adversaries.

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3. It is also manifest, and may be truly matter of wonder, by what a marvellous providence so many suffering and desolat families have been carried through without any obvious noise of their straites, now for these divers yeares, with such convincing chearfulness, yea, the experience of many made to witnes that they never lesse knew a strait, then since they were put from the ordinary meanes of their support, and others who have been more sharply tryed, could not reckon any such plunging strait and difficulty, but have also found outgate by some remarkable providence trysted, I am very sure amongst other advantages yet of these times, this shall be one, a large Register of Experience, and remarkable confirmations of the truth of the word, and promise, which the godly have had under this sharp tryal, that will be sweet matter for an, after reckoning and a greater gain then any losse their former sufferings did occasion, Yea, have we not seen, what in an ordinary way looked as irrecoverable, a stroke which a generation could not have made up, hath been a mean the Lord hath choised to promote his glory, and thereby declare himselfe to be God, hath he not made us see, how easy it is for him to turn the sharpest storm to the great advantage of his Church, that he can act in desperate cases, above the skill both of Angels, and men, and truly though we should be brought yet more low even to the place of Dragons, this may uphold the shaking hearts of his People, and besolid ground of confidence, that Christs power and faithfulness is this day engaged for his Church, and truth, he must encrease, his Kingsdome is upon the rising hand, and shall yet have a more glorious appearance in the World, what ever become of instruments, the reviving of his work is not in the reverence of men; and since we know the Lord hath solemnly declared war against Antichrist, and all who will oppose the spreading of the Gospel in these last times, yea, hath past his word to the Church, for the fall and ruin of that adversary, fall he must, though the dust of the earth should arise for that end, and it is sure Prelacy must also wither,

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that hath its life, and sap from that accursed root; they have this day a desperat cause in hand, who do engage their power to support the throne of the Beast, for they run in the way of the wrath, and vengeance of the Lord, and shall surely involve themselves in that ruin; though they were the greatest Princes of the earth. I shall onely adde, we have much ground in these times to believe that the Lord shall yet appear, and make himself known in the earth, by as great; and convincing providences both of judgement and mercy, as in any former ages, and thus vindicat his glory, and refute the Athisme of this generation, by such an argument, as shall force iniquity to stop its mouth.

Now since this is sure, which none can get denied if they will but allow some serious thoughts thereanent; that the Scripture falleth not to the ground, for *Gods way is perfect and his word is tryed, Ps. 18: ver. 30.* O is it not also sure, and a conclusion well grounded that *He is a buckler to those who trust in him*, none needs fear to venture his interests through time on the word, yea, if there could be any thing greater then a Heaven, or eternal salvation, the testimony of the God of truth might be sufficient security for the same; it is a small matter how this World doth reel, and stagger, or what be the changes of outward things, that is eneugh, the promises of the Word shall certainly take place and the expectation of the Saints shall not make them ashamed.

APPENDIX.

IT is sure the demonstration of divine truth, held forth in the Scripture, is the greatest discovery, that ever came to the sons of men; which with a more excellent light, and greater lustre, doth inlighten these parts of the earth, on which it shines, than the sun, in its Noonday brightness; this is the word of life, even the hidden wisdom of God, in a mystery, which most of the World do not understand, but flee from the same, as their plague and torment; but hereby the followers of God, know they are of the truth, and do assure their heart before him; it should be matter of astonishment, if thus the Scripture were not confirmed, to see what rage the breaking up of this light causeth amongst men, which now in the present time does in a strange manner appear, not against some particular truth only, and the uppermost boughs, but by a remarkable assault, seems to strike at the root, the very being of truth and godlines: it may be said, whilst superstition in times of greater ignorance, did overcloud and darken the visible Church, Atheism hath taken up its room, to wear this generation out, from under the aw of God, and weaken their assent to the truth; for we see men every where making it their worke, to load his way with reproach, and put discredit on his faithfulness who is the God of truth; As a witness thereto is this small essay directed, and now again comes forth to the World, with an enlargement; Which I may say, was not intended, if there had not been a pressing motive, from the uncorrectedness of the first impression, and for this, I shall make no further Apology: But if a subject of so great an import, suffer no prejudice from such an unfit pen, the favourable testimony of

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of men, or their censures, I should desire to looke on (as they are indeed) at a distance and far below that solid peace of the soul, which in the acceptation of God, is alone to be found: What access it may have to many of this generation, I know not, who are taking all advantage to strengthen their prejudice at the truth, and unsettle others therein; it is like such may pass their judgment thereon at the first looke, and throw it aside But as a Minister of Jesus Christ, who believes an appearing before the judge, and would desire mercy to be found faithful in that day, being pressed in some measure upon the horrid appearance of the Atheism and blasphemy of the time, with that avowed indifferency, now within the visible Church, in these great interests of Religion, and godliness, I lay this witnes to the truth at their door; and shall here offer a few thoughts further on this subject, in some clear *Inferences*, from that great truth of the verification of the Scripture.

Inference. I. Which we may see clear, is this, the great advantage a Christian hath for his establishment; that his security is indeed greater then his interest, or any thing he hath to adventure thereon; and sure, that is not small; since the matter is of no less earnest, besides his concerns through time, then an eternity, a Heaven, or the hazard of hell for ever. This must require a solid, and sure foundation, yea we may judge the furthest degree of certainty, where the superstructure is so great; for it is not opinion, or a probable conjecture, can be a suitable basis, to bear up that weight; but here, to answer such an interest, and give through quiet repose to the soul, we have the truth, and testimony of God, with this great witness thereto, that it assuredly takes place, and not one syllable false to the ground, without an evident performance. There are two things which, I am sure, men could not, with such ordinary thoughts consider, yea think thereon, without amazement, if they made it not their choice, to keep at a distance: One is, that such a thing is in the World this day as the very Word of God, that

that is more sure, then an audible voice from Heaven, to declare his whole counsel, and hold forth unto men the true way up towards that countrey; and does thus marvellously discover it self. 1. To come so low down, even his word and testimony who speaks from Heaven, that therewith it hath a solemn appeal to mens sence and feeling anent its certainty. 2. Which commends it self upon the nearest approach, and found the more unvaluable and of the greater price, the more it is searched into by an inquiry. 3. That though clear and plain in it self, yet by supernatural light, and evidence can only be known, which no human sagacity nor reason in its highest elevation without this can reach; but riseth far above the greatest capacity, and enduements, of which by nature, the most excellent spirits of men can boast. In a word, when once it shines in upon the soul, does then discernably stamp the very same image thereon, and begets such a marvellous likeness betwixt them, as may show the World this is a living thing. But there is a second, we may also consider with astonishment how great it is, to be a Christian, and of what marvellous import that is, I suppose there were but one or two such, to be found in the World, who were certainly known to be partakers of the divine nature, to have a real converse with God, and by experience with the word; might not the report thereof give men a strange alarme? yea put them upon an impatient search and inquiry, to know if this be sure, and what such a discovery means: O is it small to be the son of a King! But the hope and claime of a Christian riseth higher, and hath another reach, that such within a short time, whilst now in so mean a garb, shall be assuredly entered into glory, in the immediat enjoyment of God, and of the fulness of joy among that triumphant society of the Angels, the Prophets, and Apostles, and all these who are before the Throne, washed, and made white in the blood of the Lamb, and thus continue through the ages of eternity; yea in that very instant of the souls quitting the body, must admit so great a change, and enter there, where Heaven only

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only can make us know what Heaven is; it is such a strange sleep men are in, who in such concernment, are not awaked to a further inquiry: It were well if some would but allow reason its true use; whilst they travel betwixt the Poles, and can adventure to the furthest parts of the earth to pursue that, which they must so shortly forego: To judge seriously and bring the thoughts of this near, what a greater interest and at a more easy rate, and of an unexpressibly greater value, than that gold and treasure which ever came from the *Indies*, does offer itself, I say the profest Atheism of some gives not more cause of wonder, than the strange stupidity of others, and that common and easy way men have in giving an assent to divine truth: I do not mean from the want of evidence and perspicuity, but because of the greatness of the things here hold forth; this was not so strange, that we find two of the Disciples of Christ at a stand, from joy and wondering, to credit his resurrection, even whilst they saw it verified; so great was this in their eyes. Now as to this I must further point at two or three things, which seriously considered, may seem a strange contradiction to reason. 1. How men can finde a pillow to rest on, who certainly know their breath, for these few hours in the night, is not made sure; but if by a sudden arrest of death it should be stoppt, which is no strange thing in the World, they know not what is next; but every night, sleeps at an adventure of being, ere the next day, in an irrecoverably lost estate, yea is not here cause of wonder, that whilst we see time make such swift dispatch, dying men can be in that measure estranged from the thoughts of death, who so oft may hear it sound, and the bell ringing for others, yea by previous assaults discern its approach on themselves, which once come, then man goes off the stage, to returne no more, nor shall he for all the ages of eternity ever act that scheme of life, here over again. 2. How strange it is that the supposal of the truth and certainty of the Scripture, that such a thing may be, does not more alarme men, and mar their quiet; or that they can so much as

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think of an eternal estate without trembling, whilst they are at no solid determination in such a matter; yea when the Scripture of God does not only witness a Heaven and immortality, but shews the World, there is such a thing as the first fruits, and earnest of it, whereof men here may be fully assured. I would know, if such an Atheisme is to be found, that puts the Atheist beyond fear and doubting, even in his most professed confidence, and scoffing at the truth, or can sufficiently salve that heart aking, and continued hesitation he is under, that such a thing may be true. 3. I shall adde it is matter of wonder men should admit the report and attestation of others, anent the truth and reality of godliness, who yet live strangers to it themselves, yea should be at some toile and paines, and come length to be almost Christians, without pursuing this greater earnest.

Inference II. Which from the Scriptures accomplishment is clear, is this, that there is a special debt on each Christian, on whose soul the truth and faithfulness of God is sealed, to give in his seal thereto, and bear witness, that God is true. Thus is there a mutual sealing, which is undeniably clear, you see 2 Cor. 1: ver. 22. the Lords putting to his seal, which by all his people is well known: and have you not also, John 3: ver. 33. the Christians seal and witness most expressely held out and call'd for. This is indeed a duty, in which, we may say, the meanest of the Saints wants not his part, who hath that witness within himself, whereby he knows the certainty of the words of truth, which is a great thing, that such, on solid grounds, can say he does not more clearly see the truth, written in the Bible before him, then he knows and can read, but by an other character, and engraving, this within him, though none else can read the same, but he who hath it. I know there is a debt to the least Scripture truth, which these who profess the same does owe, when a witness and confession is call'd for, and hath thus special access, in a suffering time, to set to his seal by a close adherence thereto.

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But we must say, this is something else, that concerns the confirmed Christian, as a peculiar debt he owes to the truth and faithfulness of his God (which his soul knows well, and hath had oft confirmed) to give unto him the glory of his faithfulness. We find *David, Psalm 89: 1.* thus speak, as one pressed upon such a duty; and though some have a more special call and greater advantage to this than others, yet we may say, the confirming, and sealing of the truth, is like a great and publick treasure, wherein the meanest Christian wants not access to cast in his mite. Now for further clearing this, what the Christian's seal and attestation of the truth means, and what access or advantage he hath for acquitting himself of such a debt, I would point a little at, in these few particulars.

First, It is clear that he who believes and receives the testimony of Jesus Christ, does thus set to his seal, that he is true, and subscribes, as it were the truth, and doctrine of the Gospel, *John 3: ver. 33. 2.* It is also clear, the shewing forth of the power of godliness, and the virtues of him who hath called him, is through the tract of a Christian's life, a living and visible witness thereto. *3.* We may judge the converted man upon that new and marvellous discovery, he hath got of the truth, upon his first entering into a Christian state, when he hath past that great step, and as one come into an other World, hath then a special call, and advantage for such a duty, that if it were asked, what is the first service such owes to the truth? Is it not even this to commend by his seal and testimony to others, what God hath so marvellously commended to his soul? And thus needs not want access to let the World know, who may wonder at such a change, that though once he was blind, he does now see, and assuredly knows the truth is the power of God to salvation, which he no more believer upon the report and testimony of others, since now he sees it with his own eyes. He then is to answer that call, *Luk. 12. When you are converted strengthen your brethren.* *4.* When a Christian is confirmed, upon some remarkable faint and staggering, and hath got a new seal of

the faithfulness of God, is he not under some new debt; to restore, with advantage, what he had taken from the credite of the truth, and give that good report, and witness thereto, which may obviat any reflection he might have caused by his faint: Sure it is the Christian's testimony hath then this special advantage, to confirme others in the way of the Lord, that his former fears, and shakings have been so discernable; thus we see *Hezekiab*, after, such a remarkable plunge and fainting, comes in with his witness, *Isai. 38: ver. 15, What shall I say, he hath both spoken, and himself also hath done it, &c.* And *David*, *Psalms 31: ver. 22.* How concerned was he in such a duty, *I said I am cast out of thy sight, Yet thou hearest the voice of my supplication.* 5. When we see Atheism much abound, and hath a publick appearance, when it is not a particular truth, but the truth and faithfulness of God is challenged, we may judge, it then calls, and calls aloud, to the godly man for his appearance, even by some more obvious testimony, than at other times, to so great an interest; sure it is, when the lot of a Christian is in such a time cast, and amongst a generation of mockers, he will not want access, and a special call, by a christianly grave, and prudent witness, to own the truth, as that which he is obliged to seal, though there were none else; yea we may think, this should be a call and incitement, where zeal for Jesus Christ hath got a command over his soul, as might burst his tongue strings, which before were tyed, when the faithfulness of his God, which he so oft hath proven, is by men brought in question, which, to *David*, was like a sword that thrust him through, and an upcast he could not bear, when they said unto him. *where is your God?* 6. Upon the close of some sharp and remarkable trial, when the Christian, after a storme, comes safe to land, such a new discovery he hath of the truth, and faithfulness of God, layes then a new debt on him, to bear witness thereto. Is he not thus concerned not to leave the cross of Jesus Christ, at a loss, which hath left him at so great an advantage,

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or part therewith, without such a testimony, that may endear the way of the Lord to others: Thus afflicted *Job*, after a long continued storme, comes in the close to pay the truths rent by his seal and testimony thereto, *Job 42. I have heard of thee, &c.* I hope this debt, in a large measure, shall be yet found on many of this Generation, when this storme is over to press their spirits for bearing such a testimony, that they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts, But have oft there been surpris'd with his immediat help to astonishment, *Isay. 48. 21. 7.* Is not the experience of a Christian, and these grave remarks he hath of the faithfulness of God, a special trust put in his hand, and a piece of his talent, that calls for his seal, as a rent which such ow to the truth, and should have some further reach, then his own personal establishment. I must say as to this, none of the saints want their peculiar engagements, which they may judge are upon them, even beyond others; yea such singular confirmation they have had of the way of the Lord, and oft with these astonishing circumstances, that to smother, without some gain and advantage thence payed in to the truth, might be reckoned a stealth from the generation. We may judge such a thing pressed *David's* soul for a vent; *Psal. 66: 16.* and truly, something of this practice, managed with humble prudence, in a grave intercourse and communication of some special confirmations of the truth, were a choice improvement of Christian Society and fellowship, I confess, to manage this well, seems one of the most difficult pieces of duty a Christian owes to others, and I humbly judge, may be mistaken, in its chiefend, by too much dwelling sometimes on the cases of a Christian, and debating these, to which their light and judgement may give more arise, then a present pressure, and weight of the same; the multiplying of which I have oft looked on as a darkening the solid and plain way of Godliness, and making it perplex and thornie, which lyes in little bounds, when well understood: But we see, what a special improvement

of Christian fellowship is held forth, *Mal. 3: ver. 16.* for their mutual joy, and establishment in the truth, in a time when it was in question, what advantage there is to serve the Lord? I should wish so excellent a mean were more directed to this end: Nor should this mar such a duty that there may be an empty show and counterfit of that also, and the shallowest brooks sometime make the greatest noise. 8. Here is a special call for the Christian's seal & witness to the truth, under some remarkable exigence and strait, whilest throng'd with manifold temptations, then is he concerned by his appearance, to shew forth the faithfulness of God, and his testimony thereto, that may let others know, who in such times will be great observers of his way, that he is satisfi'd wit God, and with the security of his word, to rest on, when he hath no resting place els where; that he thinks not his burden too great to roll over on the promise; but hath this to say, in behalf of the truth, *Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, yet not destroyed.* You may see the Apostle paying such a debt on this account, *Having nothing I possess all things.* 2 Cor. 6. 10. lastly, I must say, a call to this duty, waits the Christian, in a special manner, at the close of his day, then, O then, is he concerned, to acquit himself of that debt, by commending the way of the Lord, and confirming others therein. Would it not be a choice appendix to the Testament, and latter will of a dying Christian, to seal with his last breath the faithfulness of God; and then when his words are of more weight than at other times, bear this witness, that through the various steps of his life, he knows God is true, and hitherto hath helped. It is sure, the present day hath its duty, and each remarkable time of ones life, hath some proper work: But this, I must say, seems to fall in, as the last service of a dying Christian to this generation, to deliver the truth off his hand, which he had received, and oft proven, with his seal, and testimony thereto: This were to bequeath a choice legacy to others.

It is not here understood, that particular rules can be given

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given for the practice of his duty, but Christian wisdom is profitable to direct, as occasion offers, and the present case circumstantiat; but sure it is, each Christian is thus a witness & as it were judicially sifted in behalf of that Attribut of the faithfulness of God, to attest by his seal as a confirmatory sign thereof, that God is true; and as there is an implicit seal by believing, there is something more explicit then called for, in times which seem to evacuate the promise, when the reality of godliness is so expressly impugned by the adversary as fanaticism; and these things I shall further adde; 1. That through the whole Scripture, we see in frequent instances, how much the saints have been thus taken up, and in these times of the Church, when there was not such access an other way, to keep up a remembrance of the faithfulness of God, and transmit a testimony thereto, we finde a pillar and stone of witness erected as, 1. Sam. 7: 12. 2. Thus hath the Christian access, in the returns of thankfulness to God, no mercy being so small, on which his faithfulness is not engraven, as we finde David often, and Jacob, Gen: 31. 10; and sure it is, the discovery of this to an observing Christian, hath sometimes a greater joy and satisfaction therewith, then the mercy in which it appears; I must say, it is a great want in that excellent duty when some testimony to the faithfulness of God is not carried on therewith. 3. Hath not the Christian an occasional call thereto, when ever this lyes in his way to speak to its credit, and bear his witness? we may see the truth and faithfulness of God came never Davids way, but we finde him speak honorably thereof, from the sense of his peculiar engagements. 4. There is no piece of a Christians suffering stated on a particular truth, but a confession is therewith called for, of the faithfulness of God; thus to bear witness before the world, that he does not offend nor is ashamed of the crosse of Christ, because he knows whom he hath believed; whilst others by choycing sin, rather then affliction, doe what in them lyeth to make God a liar.

Inference. III. From the Scriptures accomplishment,

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is that, as there is a personal debt on the Christian, there is a publick debt also on the Church, and a special trust reposed on every age thereof to seal the truth, and deliver that great interest off its hand, to the ages to come, with a witness to the faithfulness of God. The Scripture herein is clear, yea, we have it in an expresse prophesy held forth *Psalm. 145 ver. 4. 5. 6.* that one generation, in a continued series, should seal the truth to another and thus carry forward a witness to the same: For each time hath some peculiar rent, which it should pay to the posterity, from a new addition of the great and remarkable works of the Lord; and it is sure, the greater things he hath witnessed, by his more eminent appearance for the Church, in one age beyond another, does add to this debt, and puts some further engagements upon it, to record and transmit the works of the Lord, and the memory of his goodness to after times. Now with respect to this grave truth, I would offer a few particulars (which, this day, we may sadly regrave, are so much wanting) wherein something of this debt, that one age of the Church owes to another, in behalf to the truth, may appear.

1. It may be judged a debt on the Church to the posterity, to pursue that great interest of the truth by an adding further, or confirming of the faith of the saints therein, from that discovery, and peculiar advantages the present time affords; and thus effectually endeavour to advance the repute and credite the truth, on solid demonstrative grounds of its certainty. This hath the greater call, when it is so much the work of the time, and of not a few labouring therein to shake and unsettle men, as to this great foundation, yea so much written that hath a visible tendency to this end. One thing particularly should be wished, that the publick records of every age as they concern the Church, did carry therewith, more clearly, some history of the verification of the truth, by transmitting these great and conspicuous remarks of the way of God with the Church, to the posterity, by which the Scripture then hath been signally confirmed; thus should one age declare its faithfulness to the

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the next, which were a choice piece of service, being gravely, and with caution managed.

2. This debt does the Church owe to the posterity, with respect to the truth, to endeavour its transmitting purely, and without hurt and prejudice; for it is to the Church the Oracles of God are committed, and for that great trust, must she in every time be responsible: but as to this, I must say, that piece of the truth of God, which is more sharply assaulted, and hath endured greatest opposition from the adverse party, makes this debt the greater, to deliver that off her hand, with all care and circumspection, yea with some peculiar testimony thereto. It is true, there want not in every age some to appear upon the truths interest; yea, it is a duty lyes at each Christian's door, when called to give a confession of the same; but as no private appearance can answer to a publick record and monument, it is thence clear in a time of great incroachment, on the truth, when a remarkable breach is like to be made, and the assault not from a private adversary, but a publick formidable combination of a party, some more solemn, authoritative, and unite concurrence is then called for, in the Churches testimony, for her exoneration, that, with such an advantage, may witness to the ages to come, whereat their fathers left; how they held out and wrestled to keep their ground, in defence of the gospel; this we may say, is like the casting up of a bank, to guard against a further breach, when the enemy comes in like a flood: and it is known, the confessions of the Church in every age, with such a publick testimony to the truth, whilst followed with visible hazard and suffering, have been more effectually subservient to the truths conservation, then all the disputes of men; thus did they overcome, Rev. 12. 7. by the blood of the lamb, and the word of their testimony.

3. This special debt also is upon the Church, with a respect to the posterity, to contend for the truth once delivered to the Saints, and but once, since it can admit no change or alteration to the second coming of the Lord.

O how blessed a debate and strife this is, though in such an interest ~~resting~~ to the blood should be called for: But whilst I mention this duty, it cannot be understood, with respect to that great interest of Religion only, or the weightier matters of the Law, that are more fundamental, whilst under a professed zeal to these, a latitude and indifferency in other concerns of the truth is sheltered. It is indeed strange, though no strange thing, in this time. But let me ask, can a piece of truth, held forth in the Scripture, be of that low value, to warrant the quitting, or yeelding up of it when brought in debate, when one line of this, is of more inestimable worth, then the crowns and scepters of all the Monarchs of the earth? Sure it is, the God of truth hath prized it at another rate, who declares heaven and earth should rather fall, or one title of his word perish, and can these in greater things be faithful, who are not thus in a little? It is too clearly seen, how small a yeelding makes a great breach. Truths comparatively small, may be great in their season, when they are the word of his patience; yea, we may say the lesser it seems, and of mean value with many, it makes the Christian's adherence there to a greater testimony. It is clear, what a close concatenation there is amongst the truths of God, held forth in the Scripture that one part thereof cannot be reached, without a special prejudice to the whole; yea, it may be said, every corruption of the truth hath an aime at the very soul of Religion, by a direct tendency thereto.

4. It is a great duty the Church owes the posterity, for which this day, there seems a more then ordinary call to study the transmitting of truth, and godliness, not in a naked forme only, but in the life and power thereof. Sure it is now too obvious, which gives ground both for grief and astonishment, that through a large part of the reformed Church, and in these places, where sometime the truth hath brightly shined with much state and warmth; yea, where religion, in its purity, is yet professedly countenanced, and the worship of God owned, even there we may see the power and spirituality of this

as strange and unknown thing, that by many within the Church, and of some repute therein, it might be questioned, is there indeed a Holy Ghost, and an inward teaching of the Spirit, which by its working and efficacious influences, is known upon the soul? Or, is there such a thing as real fellowship and converse with God, in the secret, and more publick duties of a Christian, that is assuredly found? Oh what cause is there to fear the shadow and forme be quickly gone, when the power thereof, is so great a mystery. I know it is a sore challenge, and may seem strange to some. I do here profess it is not to reflect on any place, or particular Church by another, But we may say this want and decay is too great and universal to be hid; and now the tide seems so far spent and gone back, yea, small appearance of its returne, and the Church of Christ at that pass, that if the faithfulness of God were not surety, which stands good for all, we might upon ordinary appearance judge nothing else is left, but now to your tents every man, that each one should shift for himself, and give over the Church: but sure I am (I bless the Lord without debate in this matter) upon a better warrand then appearance, our safety is this day to keep by the vessel, and not part interests with an afflicted and almost sinking Church; a publick Spirit may yet be found the choicest way to secure a private interest. Oh? what do we see? is not almost every where mens hands upon their loyns, and so little inquiry, in that extreme exigence, what piece of duty can yet be essayed, to get religion up again, which now is at so fore a backset: we might hope a great outcoming should be where little is expected, even upon a small stirring of duty. Some things, I am sure, are to be wished, that would be of singular use to promote this interest, which I shall very briefly point at.

First, It should be wished this great mean of prayer, yet left to the Church, were with more singleness and servency improven, both by the Christian alone, and in converse with

with others. This is well known in the most dark and dismal times of her condition, what marvellous help, it hath brought at a choke, when it hath seem'd in some manner *ultimus conatus ecclesiæ*, and all other things gone. O a spirit of prayer, what advantage hath remarkably followed upon this, to fetch the wind, yea to get the vessel as it were put afloat when it hath been a low ebb with the Church, to hasten her delivery; and in the mean time keep her wounds bleeding, before the Lord; we may say, thus hath the meanest of the Saints access to do a great piece of service, even to the Church universal, and the recovery again of the power of Godliness, that is now so far gone.

2. With respect to this, it is to be wished, that a greater correspondence through the reformed Church were more effectually pursued, to know others case, what eminent hazard appears to the truth, or sore trial and assault that some particular Church may have beyond others, for witnessing mutual sympathy, for communication of counsels, the obviating prejudices and mistakes, a grave incitement and upstirring of others, to the duty of the time, and thus a further concurrence endeavoured, in promoting the great interest of the gospel. Oh sad, that since the reformation brake up, how little of this hath been practised, but now much more gone, that except by ordinary travellers, or sometime publick Gazets the great concerns of the neighbouring Churches, and the more remarkable occurrents of providence therein are but little known. I should account it a token for good, if something of a publick Spirit, with respect to such a mean, did more appear. We know not what advantage might follow this essay.

3. This should be wished, and might be a notable and useful help, yea of no great difficulty, now whilst there is such plodding in Religion, by airy notions, as if that great interest were the essay of mens wit and invention, to study the turning over of some of our choise English pieces, in other languages, which do most nervously hold

hold forth the truth of godliness, both in its simplicity, and in the life and power thereof. Such as are most fit to put men on an other sent, for bringing the naked speculation of truth down to that more near feeling, and absolutely necessary soul-converse there with; yea such as with greatest clearness, might shew the world something of the inestimable advantage of that excellent study, how well godliness suites, and is a singular help in every calling and condition of men, to make their way easy and pleasant, amidst the plunges of their life: but especially, that may hold forth the indispensable necessity thereof. It is sad to think in what a measure excellent holiness is wounded, and darkened by so great a cloud of prejudice, almost through the reformed Church, which is much pretended, upon the extravagance and unsuitable practice of many professing the same, and yet so little care to obviate and prevent this.

4. I must further adde what, I am sure, is to be wished, when so smal ground seems of hope therein, and calls now for much prayer, to see a spiritual and faithful ministry, given to the Church, of whom it might be said, these are the Ambassadors of Jesus Christ, with their Master's authority, impressed on them; who in earnest do travel in birth, to have Christ formed in their hearers, and preach with a feeling of that they speake, to themselves, as well as others, such who truely watch for mens souls, with an awfull impression of that, lest their blood be required at their hands. How great a blessing should this be to a decayed Church, and what a ground of hope were it of a recovery, for its seen and clearly witnessed, that connexion which is betwixt the Churches case, and the ministry thereof. Was it not seen at the breaking up of the Gospel, and the marvellous success it had in the beginning of the reformation after that long darkness under Antichrist, his reign, how choice and excellent a ministry was then sent forth; yea what a remarkable constellation of great lights did appear, who did both burne & shine in their time. Oh! These are gone, and but a few com-

comparatively with that time of such a spirit to be found: but this sad remark we cannot shunne, that the greatest plague the christian world and much of the reformed Church, this day, is under, is from the watchmen; by whom the truth, in its power hath been more wounded, then its most professed adversaries. I know there wants not such a horrid partie in this time, who take advantage to reflect on and decry that excellent office and appointment of Jesus Christ for his Church, because of the abuse thereof, whom I dare not from the aw of God, answer in their dialect which is only railing, and is all their strength: but the Lord rebuke that evil spirit now abroad in the World. Whilst I speak to that great advantage the Church and the power of religion hath by a faithfull ministry. I must further adde this, as a debt the present generation owes to the posterity, to witness a particular care and respect to such who are looking forth with some ayme to this great calling, that in so sadning a day these might be encouraged and stired up (I mean where there is some promising appearance) to follow their look and not faint when difficulties seem to grow in their way, and the sickle now taken out of the hand of many faithfull labourers, but especially for their taking alongs, with other studies that more excellent study, sanctification, which is so indispenably necessary to make able ministers of the New Testament. Sure these have now a speciall advantage to witness their love and respect to Jesus Christ, who keeps their face that way forward, when there seems no other incitement but the service of such a master, they may have a meen appearance and at this day conflict with many difficulties, on whom great service may yet wait for the Church of Christ.

Inference IV. It is a duty of special use with respect to a right understanding and distinct uptaking of the fulfilling of the Scripture, to discern the times and enquire seriously thereunto; since it is clear, that in particular ages and periods of time, the Scripture must take place, and the Prophecies thereof which relate to each period of time have their

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particular and exact accomplishment therein. It is sure this can be no matter of debate that such a duty is called for, in so dark an hour upon the Church, yea the greater the darknes growes, it seems to have a more pressing call; when we see the clouds gathering, that they are like to cover the face of the skie: the Church universal so sore benighted, that she hath almost lost her way amidst these mists and among the multitude of these bypaths, for then it is not only incumbent to the publick watchmen, but we may say, concerns the godly every where to be on this accompt seers, to know the time, and what Israel ought to do: sure it is, no Christian wants his watchtower, where he may get up, by a near converse with God in the Scripture, and thence as from a great height the consider the present time, yea have a clear view of the most strange perplexing occurrents thereof, how amidst these, his worke about the Church, keeps its way, and moves still forward, without losing of ground; and his truth does convincingly take place.

Now with respect to this, I shall here offer some thoughts, what in so necessary a duty, concerns the godly; and calls for their serious enquiry, for a right discovery and understanding of the time, and shall shortly touch it in a few particulars.

First, It is of great import to know from the Scripture, what of the night it is, how far it seems to be spent, and now in what watch thereof the Church is fallen, as to her present state; for thus we might know to what period of her condition, these great and remarkable things which fall out in the World do relate; This, I confesse, should be a perpley busines, if the appearance of things were our guide, and wanted that blessed conduct of the written word, when the Churches way seems involved in so strange a labyrinth; one thing is sure, that the Lord hath founded Zion, and is now building her up: which marvellous work cannot halt, but in all ages is in a continued progress, wherein the great builder, doth lose no time; and from
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the Scripture these things seem clear and manifest.

1. That as the whole election must obtaine, so now are there a great many of that elect Church already entered into a triumphant condition and are now got safe on shoar, there is this day a great and innumerable company of all Nations, Tongues and Languages, who were of old committed to the Mediators trust, and to be brought forth under the times of the New Testament, perfected and before the throne, after whom the Gospel did follow, and made many a long step to bring in from the furthest corners of the earth.

2. This also is clear, that the Church militant hath now past, and is gone through, that long continued, and most dismal trial, which under the times of the Gospel, until the close of time was to go over her head, even that sore bondage from Antichrist and under his reign, it is true this adversary does not cease, nor give over the quarrel, for he wants not wrath, when his power is abated; and this day we see him in a great stir, to have up that accursed interest and set it in its own place, that hath so remarkably been brought down and begun to fall before the Gospel: But a step further of that judgment (which assuredly is not sleeping) will end the busines; however this is now manifest, that the Winter is past, and the Churches spring begun, yea in a larg measure advanced, whose growth and tender blossome, the cold, nor storm, cannot blast, but must be subservient thereto, and hasten the summers approach.

3. Upon this enquiry, where the Church now is, and in what, or what maner of time, her present state seems to fall, I think there are clear and convincing symptomes by which some notable Crisis, in her condition may be discerned, that after many conflicts, and sore wrestling since her victory begun over Antichrist, this time of the Church seems to fall under that more remarkable assault, which may be looked for from this adversary, before the powring out of the fifth vial on his throne and seat; which as the prelude of so great a victory, may in some proportion

portion thereto, be more dreadful and sharp for a time; then any we have seen: I humbly judge the Scripture points clearly at this, which shews the wrestling condition of the Church, and a war continued betwixt Antichrist and the Lamb, even in his falling state; *Rev. 17. v. 14.* until that last decision (which is made sure in the Churches favour) put him off the field, *For the Lamb shall overcome, and they who are on his side, who are called chosen and faithful,* and since it is thus, that the Churches interest is advanced, by the renewed assaults of that adversary; should it be strange that the several steps of her rising, have some conflict and opposition proportioned thereto? must she not be in pain and labour, as a woman in travel for her bringing forth, yea do not the sharpest showers both presage, and hasten the delivery? for this doth the Scripture witness, which is written for the ages to come, *Micah. 4. ver. 13.* *Be in pain, O Daughter of Zion, and go forth unto Babylon, for there shalt thou be delivered:* I must judge, so formidable an approach of Antichrist this day, and the advantage he seems to have, with these sore struglings of the Church of Christ, as in an extream betwixt life and death, do more promise, then threaten; and are a hopeful presage of a further enlargement, and the bringing forth some great and important truth in its season to a performance, yea have a direct tendency under the wonderful conduct of the blessed disposer of these things, to help forward such a mercy.

4. This we may know from the Scripture, though now it seem a contradiction both to sense and reason, that the Churches interest is on a present advance, and at this day on the prevailing hand: It is true under all the changes of her condition, and through the whole time of the New Testament, this truth must be made out, *John. 3. ver. 30.* that Jesus Christ in his Kingdom *must increase*, even when choicest instruments wear out, and to appearance in a most languishing decay; that interest doth then flourish as the Palmtree, the more it is depressed, nor hath the Church bounds set to its continued increase, until it

once come to the perfect day when the Kingdom shall be delivered up to the Father, and all powers subdued, and brought under the Mediators feet; but this rise and increase of the Church, which is here understood, on the falling of Antichrist, I must say, hath a further reach, and is in a more eminent, conspicuous way pointed at in the Scripture, as that which waits on a more solemn, and remarkable period of the Churches state: It is true such houres may fall in, with some sad intervals, in which success and all advantage appears on the adversaries side; for thus we finde the Scripture point forth Antichrists ruin, and the progress of his judgment and down casting in the various steps thereof, with a special resemblance to the Lords way with Pharaoh; of whom he appears to have been a type, such judicial strokes of induration on both, a gradual procedure by one plague after another, with the same effect and product, to give the Church a new assault, on any favourable interval; until the great God make his power known as once he did at the red Sea. For there we may say, did the Lord first found a national Church, with a special type, of the great works and deliverances he would do for her in after times, and by this represent that marvellous stroke he is to bring on Antichrist. It is not strange to see the truth brought down to the grave, yea as it were buried, when even this thing by the overruling providence of him who maketh all things work together for her good is turned to her advantage, and tends to her rising with a greater lustre and brightness; who could in an ordinary way judge, the reformed Church, then upon an advance in the French massacre, the Catholick League there, and the Low Countrey persecution by *Alva*, yet these were an antecedent preparation to her further rise, which a little time made appear.

5. This further I shall adde, as to the present time of the Church, which from the Scripture seems clear; that, that blessed, much longed for, and glorious day of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (which as the last period of the full accomplishment of all that is written will

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once for all and for ever put a glorious close to the Churches warfare, the souldier's sword and helmet shall then be layd aside, and give place to the victors harpe and crown never to be layd downe againe) hasteth apace, O let him who writeth and him who readeth say even so come Lord Jesus quickly. It is sure that God who hath appointed man his time, and with whom the number of his moneths and years are, hath set time its glasse also, and bounded the duration of this world, that it cannot continue one minute more, and though the particular time falls not under our inquiry, which the Majesty of God hath concealed from the Angels; yet is this clear, there are signs given of its near aproach, which in their season will be discernable, though little noticed by the world, it being in such a lethargy, and men then so thronged with the cares of this life that these grave forewarnings will not rouse them up; but it is evident such signs are not given in vain, for therewith the Church hath a call to discern witelie what appearance there is of the aproach of that day, yea on such an accompt to lift up their head with a solemn congratulation; O what a marvelous truth is this, the serious thoughts of which, might give men new subject for wonder each day, that the time is hastening, when the redeemer of the Church shall appear in the clouds of heaven, in flaming fire with an innumerable company of the Angels, and now the dust of the Saints hath not long to sleep, until they be awaked with that unspeakable sweet and ravishing sound of the last trumpet: faithful is he who hath promised, yea for further assurance, we have a solemn oath thereto, by him who liv's for ever and ever; it is long since John gave this warning to the Church, behold he cometh with clouds; and then did these primitive Christians solace themselves on that ground; some few evidences of this dayes aproach, with a safe warrant from the scripture we may discern, which as the blossoming of the spring doth witnes the Summer is now near. 1. If the whole dayes of the Gospel, since that glorious triumph of the Mediator in his suffering for the Church, and his resur-

rection, be upon the Scriptures reckoning, the last times, we must then judge the night is far spent, and the day at hand. 2. If in the dayes of the seventh trumpet the mystery of God shall be finished, is not this clear that two ages are almost past since it begun to blow, under which the interest of the gospel hath a most remarkable advance. 3. If the last stroke and utter abolishing of Antichrist, shall be by the brightnes of Christs second coming 2 Thes. 2. 8. is there not solid ground thence to judge this blessed day hasteth when his falling so far advanced, it is sure we have seen his Kingdom in a great measure darkened, his consuming and mouldering down by the breath of Christs mouth in the preached gospel; and now wait in hop, for that more remarkable step of his judgment, which the Scripture, I think giv's as a near sign of the coming of the Lord even such as the white skie, and morning brightnes, is to the watchman of the dayes being near; and thus as wee see the ruin and downfal of the man of sin advance, there seems to be a proportional ground of certainty thence to conclude the neer approach of the day of Christ's second coming.

Second particular, which in our discerning the time calls for a serious enquiry is this, *what the present appearance, and signs of the time seem to point at*, for these as the body, are of special use to give a clear discovery of its temper, and disposition, but this is a prognostication that goeth above the stars and all the rules of Astrology, which the Scripture only can make us know, I confesse this day they seem sad, and every where look with a threatening aspect on the Church, we see not now our sings, and these tokens for good, which sometimes have appeared: but there are presages, if we could gravely look thereon, that might cause us with astonishment enquire, what can such things portend, and when will be the end of these wonders? Some few I shall breisly pointat, which concern this time, that if we be not much asleep might be very rousing and make us regard the same with an awful, and humbling impression, for they truly threaten; yet I must say

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say with a reference to the Scripture and upon an inquiry into that unerring record anent their meaning, first that we have a safe warrant from them to conclude that whatever may befall a particular Church, yet nothing thence can be concluded as demonstrative of a mortal prejudice to the Church universal; for though this or that particular Church may be cut off and spued out of his mouth (as many have and most of the particular Churches may this day meditate terror if he spared not the natural branches take heed lest he also spare not thee should sound an alarme to each Church, these very things with highly aggravating circumstances being too obvious and easy to be found with them for which he cast others off) yet he must encrease and his Kingdome, yea when he seems to lose ground in one place of the world it is made up with advantage by the enlargement of the same in another place, and often out of the very ruines and dissipation of that Church which he casts off he carries materials to build him an house elsewhere: in which case we are in stead of a querulous saying, why is it thus? to adore and blesse the glory of the Lord from his place, to justify his procedure and be glade that they to whom he was not spoken of shall see and they who had not heard shall understand, secondly we may also say with the same warrant, that even a particular Church which hath very death presaging symptoms and scarce a token for good can by him who healeth backslidings and loveth freely be recovered, he can make dry bones to flourish as a green herb, for the issues from spiritual death belongs to him, he can make them who had fallen from their first love repent and doe the first works, whereby the departing of the glory and the removing of the candlestick out of his place shall be prevented. I am so much the more pressed to touch this a little, because the very few serious who are yet left or delivered from that spiritual sopor and stupidity which hath seized on others, while they lay to heart the things which concerne the Kingdome of Jesus Christ, are, upon the frightful aspect of affairs and on the consideration of what they observe in the temper of men and tendency of things, ready

to cast away all confidence and abandon themselves to a simple dependency, they almost question, whether they ought to entertain any hope that we shall any more be called by that blessed name Jehovah Shammah the Lord is there, seeing nothing appears at present in the disposition of men or dispensation of God which doth not seeme to portend a final departure. Notwithstanding whereof I would desire such as to beware lest in their heartlesnesse they limit the holy one of Israel and circumscribe the sovereignty of grace within its just latitude and limits, so for their establishment against such a dependency and for their excitement to a serious wrestling with him in order to his abode with us to consider these particulars.

First, We may call this one of the signs and presages of the time, that the devil is now so much aloft, and in a strange way bestirring himself against the Church, to beget every where a prejudice at the truth, which this day, by very remarkable effects of his power, may be seen: 1. It is sure he is a bad neighbour, yet we must say he endangers the Church most, when because he makes no great noise he is least discerned; his being apparently quiet and still hath been found in experience more fatal to the flourishing and real successe of the gospel then his rage, and in his simular flight more prevalent then in his more furious assaults, but we have the Scripture to ask concerning this, which makes these clear. 1. That his appearing with great wrath shews his time to be short, and that it will be no continued or lying storm, *Rev. 12. 12.* 2. We thence know, his being let loose with a more then usuall liberry to trouble the Church, is previous to some great and remarkable restraint; which you may read. *Rev. 20. 7. 8.* where he is in a more special way let loose, but we find *v. 10.* his being chained up for ever followes. 3. We may clearly see from the Scripture the devil much aloft, with a more remarkable stir and noise, when some great thing from the Lord is to be brought forth for the Church, When the set time, that solemne and blessed time

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time was now come of compleating by that one sacrifice for ever the work of redemption, so that this hour and power of darkeness did introduce an everlasting sunshine upon the Church, and Satan by pursuing the Prince of life unto the death had a most fatal overthrow, for by death he overcame him who had the power of death that is the devil, and by being lifted up upon the crosse he spoiled principalities and powers triumphing openly over them, and thus dying sung the victory and said, it is finished, whereby a victory over all enemies is eternally ensured to the saints: yea is it not clear, what an hot alarm the Church may expect from him, upon the approach of that great victory and the decision of the last battel betwixt Michael and the dragon, see *Rev. 20: 9. 10.* what an appearance he will then have, and in what a manner will he bestir himself.

2. Is not this a present sign of the time, about which we may with some astonishment enquire what it doth mean, and if it hath any favourable aspect on the Churches, that wee see almost every where the most unit and formidable assault of the adversaries of the truth, and its special aim at the kingly power and Supremacy of the Mediator, as Head over his Church; at which great truth the opposition of this time seems most directly to be levelled, yea we may say, the Crown of Christ which becoms him alone to wear, and this piece of his glory is now betwixt Antichrist, and the Princes of the Earth divided, each contending for his share: Sure this is too discernable and at present the adversary seems to prevail, even to a bearing down and bringing under of that great interest of our blessed Master; but it is as sure there is no ground to fear this, being well understood, which is a most hopeful and promising sign to the Church; for we must thus reason from the Scripture, if Christ must reign until all his enemies be brought in subjection, it is then sure the greater the opposition and assault be, the victory must be the greater, and if that be not only prayed for, but a clear prophecy, *That Jesus Christ will take unto himself his great Power and Reign.* Must we not then expect he

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will take it, yea in a more eminent and conspicuous manner, when men are seeking in the height of their rebellion and rage against the Lord and his anointed to seise on his Scepters and snatch it from him, and if this also be sure, and in the volumn of that record of the Scripture written concerning him, that his Crown must flowrish on his owne Head, shall not then his enemies be cloathed with shame? Yea hath not this truth a dreadful aspect on the crown and Scepters of many princes who would rob the mediator of his?

3. Is it not a strange presage, and sign of the time, that we now see most hopeful and promising appearances for the Churches good, remarkably blasted, things which in an ordinary way looked to be grounds of encouragement, made to fail, we see human props almost every where removed, or broken, the truth deserted by great men, yea the families of such falling off this day from the Lord, whose ancestors for a long time had been zealous for his interest: I confesse this is a threatening appearance, by which many now seem to be shaken, but I would humbly reason on Scripture grounds, that it is no bad sign, but hath therewith some comfortable aspect on the Church; it being clear. 1. That such a connexion is no strange thing in the bible, betwixt an extream exigence of the Churches case, and the Lords eminent appearing for her outgate, see *I say* 30. 18. & 63. 5. *Isa.* 51. 20. 21. 22. Yea I must say it is hard to finde any great mercy, and remarkable deliverance of the Church, but hath at some such backset trysted her, 2. Is not such a disadvantage and forsaken case expressly held forth as one of graces opportunities of doing good to his people; read. *Ier.* 30: *ver.* 14. 15. &c. and you will see it; that when none is to plead her cause, no healer, and Zion called an outcast which no man seeketh after, thence does the Lord allow his people to be encouraged and to take it as a ground of hope, he will by his own immediat hand appear. 3. Is it not from the word clear, that a people at such a disadvantage, and under most visible weaknes when in Gods way, may be then made use of,

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for greatest service; they were in as sore distress of whom *Heb.* 11. 24, it is written, out of weaknes were made strong, &c. I shall further adde, can there be cause from the withdrawing of humane help, and probable means of safety to fear the Churches ruin, when it falls under his hand, who by things most destructive can serve his interest, and bring salvation at such a time: when none but God could save, and why are these wonderful providences, that so oft have met the Church in a forsaken case, written before us in the Scriptures is it not for after times, to witness to the posterity how the Church may be cast down, but not destroyed, and though she fall she cannot ly still, but must arise *Hosea.* 6. 1. 2. 3. Nor have her adversaries any cause of triumph thence, *Mic.* 7. v. 8. 9. 10.

4. As to the present appearance of the time, is not this a threatening sign, which hath a very dreadful aspect on the Church; even that discernable losse and disadvantage, the best now seem to be at in their frame & that under a growing trial of the Church, and the great dislemper many of these appear to be in, whilst we may see much of that holy fear, and tendernes, that did formerly shew it self amongst the godly gone, corruption aloft, prejudice easily taken, a Spirit of jealousy powred out, yea very strange and unusual outbreakings in offence and scandal, and oh, is there not here cause of fear, that the righteous God be on a further departure from his people, and that his judgment shall yet more hotly pursue such; until he have consumed this generation? On which account if he should make us a generation of his wrath we are called to adore, and justify the unspotted way of the Lord; yet even as to this, I must adventure with respect to sovereignty of grace (which is only like it self, and infinitely above our thoughts) to offer some discovery from the Scripture of what he hath done in like cases: How marvellously hath the gracious and long suffering God interposed, and at such a sore backset helped his Church? For it is clear, 1. That when the Church hath had no argument to make use of, no confidence to plead, but broken and confounded, under the sense of

horrid guilt, he finds one in himself, *Isai. 48: ver. 9.* For my names sake will I defer my anger, &c. 2. We finde the Covenant made use of by the Lord, to fix a judicial procedure against his people, *Psal. 60: ver. 44.* Nevertheless he regarded their affliction when he heard their cry and remembered for them his Covenant. 3. We finde the rage and violence of the adversary, and their taking advantage to blaspheme, made use of as an argument by him, to owne his people, who had otherwise forfaitured all the former grounds of confidence, *Dut. 32: ver. 26.* 4. We may read how soveraigne grace, hath thus marvellously stepped in, when the rod did not humble, and smiting would not do the turne: *I smote them, and they went on frowardly in the way of their heart, Isai. 57: ver. 17.* Yet, sayes the Lord, I will not thus quit them, there is one cure for all, *I have seen their wayes, and will heal them;* Such a discovery also have we thereof, when a peoples ruin is of themselves, and iniquity hath brought them low, *Hof. 13: ver. 9.* O Israel, thou hast destroyed thy self, but in me is thy help; yea hath not grace rescued these on whom their mercy must be forced and while on a hot chase in departing from God, *Hof. 2: ver. 7. 9.* 5. Have we not this choice discovery of the Lords way with his people held forth in the Scripture, that whilst he works for them, *He will work these in them also Isai. 26: ver. 12.* I shall adde, thus hath the freedome of grace, O marvellous grace! shined forth in former ages of the Church, but they sadly mistake its meaning, who are thus made secure and not thereby led unto repentance.

5. This looks like one of the signs of our time, that there is a great wearing out of the godly, yea the choice thereof, even by a more then usual dispatch; and is not this a sad Scripture presage of evil coming, when such are (as it were) hastened away that they may be hid in the grave, from a further storme? Yet these things seem clear also. 1. Consider what a remarkable consumption did almost wear out the Church in the wilderness, whilst even then there was a hastening of her after enlargement; and though a fore judgement yea the Churches mercy in a greater upmaking of that

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that loss was helped forward; yea we finde *Moses* and *Aaron* with many of these, who had been most eminent instruments, in *Israels* coming forth out of *Egypt*, taken away on a near approach of their entrie into *Canaan*. 2. It is sure some of the greatest promises of the Scripture, waits on the Church when brought to a very small remnant, *Ezek. 6: ver. 8. 9. Isai. 37: ver. 31. 3.* Hath not the Lord said in such a case, *The consumption determined shall overflow with righteousness?* *Isai. 10: ver. 20.* That the next tide can bring in as many with a marvellous increase, as these former consuming strokes had taken away; yea is it not seen with a wearing out of the godly, and a declining of religion, in one part of the World or of a countrey where many have been called, that it doth breake up remarkably in an other, and thus the Gospel recovers that interest, which it seemed to have lost.

6. Does not the present appearance of the time, threatened by very unusual signs and presages, some sharp storm to come now upon the World, which in many instances we may discern, that there is some remarkable work of judgment to be brought forth, and a great break amongst the nations near, (though the earth seems this day in a strange measure quiet yea so extraordinary a calm now through the World, may it not be a presage of some great storm which as too clear and hot a blink, foretels a break of the weather.) sure it is there is a sound of great wrath and judgement in the ears of many who know what is to discern the times, It is well the Scripture is neer, a prognostication that can answer all the ages of the Church, and it is there we should enquire, what such a sign does portend, we may not wish the evill day; but on such an appearance of the time, that awful impression *Hab. 3. 16.* is called for, to be in a trembling fram, when God threatens and does thus utter his voice; yet is it clear that from these threatening signs, there is a comfortable sound of much good to the Church, for. 1. We finde days of vengeance on the World, held forth as necessary for the accomplishing of the Scripture *Luc. 21. 22.* and made subservient to the bringing

bringing forth some special truth thereof unto a performance. 2. We finde in times of greatest judgment, the Churches interest then set apart, and secured, with a large warrant to the godly, not to fear; even whilst his garments are dyed with blood; *Isa. 63. 1. Ezek. 9. 4. Rev. 3. 10. 3.* May we not see also the Churches enlargment, and some of her greatest mercies thus ushered in, which is clear. *Is: 63. 4. Zeph: 38,* and O what a strange connexion is there? That the purting the earth in a flame, and overturning the nations, when the Lord, as a lion does rouse himself up to the prey, should be the very rise to an accomplishing of some great promises for the Churches advantage: yea and as a prelude to the same: yet nothing more evident to such who understand the Scripture, and by such a sign does the Lord speak comfortably to his people, we finde a dreadful Winter storm on the World, pointed out as a spring time to the Church, and the trees putting forth their blossom, as *Luk. 21. 25*, it is clear her deliverance may be begun, and the storm then breaking, which may for a time put the Church under greater difficulties then before, yea cause the godly mistake, and tremble at the sight of their mercy, because of these things by which it is ushered in even when it is before their eyes. I shall adde no more but this, it is our great concernment, to fear him who guids all these things, to whom alone the determination of events doth belong; and this is the wisdom of his people, not to faint at the strange appearance of the time or the signs thereof, but to know what is called for, and thence read personal duties, from the sad presages of publick judgment, and to pursue more nearnes with God, and ensure a retreat under his shadow until the indignation pass over, *for behold the Lord cometh out of his place to visit the inhabitants of the earth, and the earth shall disclose her blood, and no more cover her slain. Isai. 26. 21.*

A third particular which concerns the godly with much circumspection to notice and understand, in their discerning the time is, the peculiar snares and hazards thereof, this is the Scripture character of the wise man, to discern time

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time and judgment, it being so oft verified *Eccles. 9. 12.* that in an evil time, the children of men are ensnared, when it falls suddenly upon them; sure it is there are searching times, when the Christians way is more difficult, and narrow (though each day hath its snares, which in a special way waits thereon) and then is it the wisdom of the prudent to understand his way, and know his ground, which the adversary by subtil and indiscernable approaches, will seek to draw him off; then is a quick, sagacious discerning in the fear of the Lord called for, to have their eyes in their head, and be in a watching posture, when the net is closely spread under their feet: it is a sad remark, too clearly verified oft times on a people professing the truth, which is said of Ephraim, strangers have devoured their strength, and they knew it not, yea their not discerning of the same, prov's a special cause of their further ruin; and is it not written for the ages to come, in what a secure and sleeping posture Samson had his hair cut, he first lost his discerning of such a snare, ere he lost his eyes: we finde David through many of the Psalmes in his wrestlings with God, more solicitous for the preventing the snares of wicked men, and a delivery thence, then from their rage and violence: there is a groaping the pulse of the times by which the present distemper and hazard of the Church may be known, as well as of the body of man; and I must say, this day in a special manner calles us to this grave study. I intend no further application, but a very short touch at some things in general, which rightly pursued in the godly mans serious study may help to discern something of the publick snares of the time, and how they get advantage in their approach, for these closely wait their season, for in vain is the net spread in the sight of the bird.

First, It is clear each time hath its peculiar distemper and evils, that have then a special power and prevalency therewith, the observing of which concerns the godly for their more watchful adverting to the snares of that time, for then the temptation of the time goes therewith, as the
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present distemper discovers it self, whether in a hot boiling fever, or in a dead lethargy, and follows these evils, which are in that time most contagious, where the current of the multitude runs, which is giving the godly the greatest assault, and seem to be warmed under the favourable aspect, and countenance of great men; yea these evils, which promise some outward advantage, and security from trouble, when the question is stated betwixt sin, and suffering, it is there the present snare does haunt, and there lyes a special piece of the godly mans work, to hold off and keep a distance from the least accession thereto; yea I may say next to the salvation of their soul, to be solicitous all alongst their way, to have their garments kept from the smallest stain and spot thereof; a touch a smal defilement from a publick prevailing evil, being found to draw more deep on the conscience, and with more difficulty doe men recover, and escape thence, then from many other personal infirmities.

2. It is also clear there is some piece of the truth of God in each time of the Church that is more questioned and brought in debate, by which with greater advantage and clearnes we may know where a publick snare doeth ly; for here is its aime directed, to entangle and assault the godly man, where in a special way he is called to his post, to contend for such an interest; and thus it may be said, if one keep sight well of present duty, he will with more facility finde out the sent on which the snare of the time is, how it directs its motion to darken or cast an obstruction in the way of that duety.

3. We may thus discern a prevailing snare, and its getting ground, by that tendency there is in a day of trial, to question and make new inquiry anent duties which were once clear and unquestionable, when their judgment was not byased from any outward incitements, for this speaks mens finding a sad invention, to be rid of their conscience, by extenuating present contraverfies, a design which (in the righteous judgment of the Lord) is seldom set on foot by any, but they too visibly thrive therein, for their

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further ruin, and gets an answer according to the idol of their heart, thus Balam we have in divine record, as a dreadful instance, who tried that way, and therein was succesfull, and is it no a known remark, that a hesitaiton, and faint upon the heart from want of resolution to suffer for the truth, will not long want a scruple in the head to cause a debate thereanent, and then is it easy for a snare to enter, O with what fear & tendernes should light be regarded, which as the apple of the eye, may by the least thing be hurt, but is not easily healed: thus is it, men doe insensibly wear out from under these former Impressions they had upon them of duty, and ere they are awar have their judgment by a judicial stroke, determined in that, which was before their desire; they know little, that depth of a mans heart, who are not jealous over a change on their judgment in an houre of trial when its tendency is, to spare themselves.

4. We may discern a publyk snare in it's approach, by that advantage the adversary gets thereby to divide the godly and these who appeare for the truth, amongst themselves, for then it is easy to enter by such a breach, and throw in the bait in so muddy a water, it being too obvious what an advantage a snare hath, where jealousy with these bitter effects of privat strif and quarreling turn mens eyes off the publick hazard, and blunts that edge of contending for the truth, in smiting one upon an other, I doe not mean but there may be a necessity oft on the godly to withstand their friends to their face, yea the eminentest in the Church, were it a Peter, Gal. 2. 11. when the truth is concerned, but this should be with greatest caution and tendernes to obviat a breach, which is like the breaking in of waters, whilst the watching adversary waits his advantage in such a day of their halting, and it is too sadly known, how small a wedg, that is driven with a tendency to that end, makes way for the entry of a further snare, see. 1 Cor: II. 16, what a sad connexion there is betwixt a dividing time of the Church, and a further departing from the truth, but we must alwayes take head that we so pursue

pursue union amongst our selves as that Christ and his cause be not left alone.

5. A present snare may be seen by the sudden change of known adversaries, and the friendly insinuations of these who were wont to threaten, that in such an appearance there lyes an ambush, and is but a change of weapons for a seen advantage, sure this should be ground of fear, and a cautious advertence to be much alone with God, that men may know the voice of the shepherd, lest they follow after a stranger, it being more usual, to be stolen off their feet in a calme, then blowen downe by a storm; it is hard to stand before the blandishments of men, where that more endearing, and sweet relish of peace with God is not kepted on the soul, which is a choice mean to make the ear deaf to the most charming voice of the enchanter: of hath it been seen that adders poison is under their lips, whilst wrath is broiling in their heart *Pf. 140.* yea that the cruel man can change his countenance, when it is fit to lay a snare, and with Joab embrace them in their arms whom they intend to smite under the fifth rib.

6. May not thus a snare be seen in its approach; by the prevalence the fear of man hath over the time, and the unusual command, it seems to have sometimes over the spirits of men, over these whose former zeal and resolution for the truth, hath in other trials with much advantage appeared, here is indeed cause to watch, for in the fear of man there is a snare *Prov. 29: 25.* which then will take advantage to pursue, when it finds men in a flying posture and shrunk so far below their former appearance: we, find the godly man hath his breast-plate, but he hath no piece of armour for his back, when he turns his face from resisting it's sad when the adversary is taught to follow, by our fainting, and that spirit which is in the World seems to be upon the ascendent, with a prevalence even over the spirit of the godly; yea these debased, and made contemptible in their eyes, in whom the appearance of God, and his authority upon them, at an other time would have made the hearts of their enemies to have trembled; this is the

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obvious in a humbling and judicious time of the Church,
until once that houre of her trial goe over.

7. A publick snare is then to be feared, and calls for a watching eye, by that success which waits on a sinful course, especially when such a shine is of any continuance, for then new queries will be started, strange reports spread, with much subtil reflexion on the way of the Lord, to make the godly question the same: David found it not easy to stand before this, which put him to bring under debate his principles, and the advantage of his cause, *Psal. 73: 13*, and in such a trial doth the adversary by some continued observation, know how to assault the followers of the truth, and attacke them at their weakest, then is it the scandal of the cross causeth many offend, for it is sore for such to suffer, who know not the fellowship of the cross of Christ, which is a piece of the greatest and most near fellowship with him upon the earth; yea then the Church may run more hazard from some of her friends, then the professed adversary, for thus oft is a prevailing snare helped forward; it cannot but be a searching and hazardous time, when many are turning aside, and some of understanding suffered to fall; who are ready to press their sin as duty on others, for seldom doe such fall off, but are found more stirring and active in such a way to ingage others, then they were, while holding their former integrity to pursue the truth's interest; thus we have seen it, so it is, let us hear it and know it for our good.

8. Thus a snare of the time may be discerned, by the tendency thereof to corruption in the Church, and producing still the same effects, what ever be pretended, when by the handes of Esau, it discovers itself, though it have the voice of Jacob: And doth not the ruin of many who have dashed on such a rock, and have been thus taken, put a sad mark thereon, for it may be said no snare or subtil contrivance of the adversary, waits the godly in the present time, but if men doe not consent

to shut their eyes, they may from the Scripture, and observation of the Church, see at others cost, some discernable beacon set thereon, what a sad tendency such a thing hath still had, to a making shipwrack of faith and a good conscience, how hard it is to dance about the fire and not be burned, or stand in the way and counsels of ungodly men, and not be ensnared.

9. It seems to threaten a snare, when enquiry about the duty of the time is pursued without respect to the present case, and circumstances thereof; for thus a snare may wait in a thing at other times indifferent, the neglect whereof upon some special circumstances, may be a quiting their duty; and the doing also, or yeelding in something in an other case warrantable, at some time may fall under a moral prohibition; as this, when a thing in its self indifferent, *Circa sacra & cultum Dei*, is pressed by the Magistrat, as necessary by vertue of his sole command and to the subjecting the godly in things, where they are not subject, and to the prejudice of an other jurisdiction: can there be an enquiry anent this in the general, without a particular application to the complex case, it may be sayd a snare is then on the entry, when that consideration of the Prophet is not much regarded in the present question, *is this a time for such a thing*; for the disciples to refresh themselves with sleep, was a piece of innocent duty; but that they could not watch this one hour with their Master in his sufferings, must needs vary the case, for it was in so fare a deserting him.

10. I shall further adde, is not this a sad appearance of some publick snare getting advantage which is witnessed by a previous disposition, and that prevalency privat ingagements to an outward interest hath upon mens spirits, for a snare enters not without a call, and finds within, its greatest strength and advantage; yea a conformity to the World, with an unsensible wearing out of soul-tenderneffe, is too oft known, to have a tendency for conforming to an evil course, for the motion is then down

down the hill, and there is cause to fear the snare will follow in there, and ly about that interest, which otherwise hath got the mastery over them: How many in embracing the World, have at the next step fallen of from the truth? No weapon hath been more made use of against the Church, and hath ruined moe, so that it may be said, where other snares have killed their thousands this its ten thousands; I must say, such an appearance in a time of the Churches trial, is like the breaking forth of her gray hairs, nor is it easy for these to stand, or resist, who are so far gone backward, or keep their feet before a snare, where the truth ceaseth to get a command over their heart.

A fourth particular, which calls for a serious inquiry, from these who know time, and are wise to discern the same, is this, *what can the righteous doe*, when there is a growing darknes on the Church, and the very foundations like to be shaken, yea the hearts of many so far downe that they are like to lose their hand therewith, in the matter of duty, and give over, as men astonished, seeing this evil is from the Lord: It is no smal thing, to manage well such a time of the Churches trial, and in so sharp a storme, there is need of much balast: but we know the Scripture of God is neer, which stands good for his peoples conduct, to let them know how to steer their course in the darkest night, and from that blessed record, there is one thing clearly held forth to answer such a time, which is a great duty; *let the righteous hold on his way, and he who hath clean hands wax stronger, and stronger; Job 17. ver. 9.* For it is sure they have cause and solid ground for this, though the earth should in a more strange manner reel, and the pillars thereof seem to be dissolved, since it is certain and true.

First that all is well, and nothing can fall wrong, whilst the foundation of God, which is his eternal

council held forth in the Scripture, abids sure; though other foundations be shaken, the godly man does then ly at a safe anchor, which will not drive in a stormy day, his great interest is beyond hazard, though more then an immortal soul were in that adventure, his heaven is sure, whereof he cannot be beguiled, whilst things upon the earth seem most uncertain; and must it not then be well with the Church, were it even sinking in to the grave, since the Mediator will bring it up again; mens evil eye cannot hurt, nor their cursing blast that interest which God hath blessed, for it is then sure, there is no enchantment against Jacob, or divination against Israel.

2. Is not the truth, and that great interest of godlines, that, to a Christian, and in such a manner known to him, that it needs no testimony from men, or incitement from example of others, for to these it commends it self, and does wities its reality, though by all the generation amongst whom they live it should be cryed down; it's sure to be a Christian indeed, requires this, to know the truth and be founded on such a ground, that can support and quiet the soul, in the greatest falling off, of others, though none else were to walk in that way; that if it were supposed, one serious Christian in such an age, were in the whole World, and thus left alone, there is so great a discovery and certainty of the truth to be known upon the soul, as should oblige him; to such a declaration with *Joshua*, but as for me I will serve the Lord. O to see a generation of men of such mettall who with a resolut peremptorinesse would forsake all men and follow the Lord, and serve him without company, if better might not be we might by the hand of such expect to be led through Jordan, after our *Moses's* are dead by whom we were led thorow the red Sea, but alas where are they!

3. Have not these ground in the darkeſt time, to be confirmed, who may see cause to improve the most shaking things, which fall out in their day, for their

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further establishment, and strengthen their hand in the way of the Lord, by these dispensations at which many stumble: It is strange to observe what a challenge and upcast some have in their reflecting on the truth, on these grounds which in their conscience, they must admit to be a convincing witness thereto; but having at some length elsewhere touched this, I shall but add these few things more, which as evident grounds of establishment, in the way of the Lord, and for our further strengthening therein should be improved; which yet are an usual challenge by many against the same.

First. That the number seems so small who follow the truth, and are found serious in the study of Godlines, can be no ground to question this, without a strange mistake; since men must either quit the Scripture, or admit, the way to life is strait, and few enter therein: Yea that the small convoy the truth hath in the World is an expresse verification of it; Is there the least warrant to make the suffrage of the multitude a test of the way of the Lord, but it is sure we can shew them the contrair, that his followers are a select number chosen out of the World, the great bulk whereof is outlawed, and put out of the intercession of the Mediator, else the Scripture could not be fulfilled, and is not the falling of many from the truth a great seal thereto, no less then the incoming of others, and that excellent way of holynes, the more discernably known by such a character, that it is every where spoken against.

2. That so great contempt and reproach does this day attend the truth and practise of Godlines, should prejudice none thereat, but be a further ground of strengthening, to help the Christian to hold on his way, since it is nothing els but what is foretold, and what the most excellent of the earth in their time have met with to be accepted the filth and of scouring of the World; in no age hath the truth wanted such an assault, and in no age hath it wanted a triumph over the same: Yea hath not the greatest reproacher

sometime been forced to give in his retraction, and make earnest of that, which before he scoffed at? When God comes neer by a stroke of his judgment, then do the proud change their stile and speak in another language upon the awful appearance of death, but this also doth witnes, what a marvellous thing Religion is, which with these who know it, loseth no weight, when under the greatest cloud of detraction, and contempt; For then is Christ still pretious and his way desireable, unto these who beleve.

3. That sentence is not speedily execut against an evil course, we see what improvement the World makes thereof, to be more desperately wicked; but is not this also a seal and confirmation of the truth, and a ground for establishment in the way of the Lord, which verifies the Scriptre, *Ecclef. 8: 11*. And it is there men may see a short reпреival from punishment is no pardon, or acquittance, whilst sin runs on to an after account; that judgment deferred when therewith a further hardening appears, doeth threaten more then a quick and present dispatch, and shoves the stroke will be the greater when it comes, surely if this fell not out, whereof the World takes such advantage, it might in so far put us to question the truth, of which one syllable must not fall to the ground.

4. So great an abounding of prophanity and ungodlines within the Church, is it not an undeniable seal to the verity of the Scripture, which thus takes place, and should help the godly man to hold on his way, it being unanswerably clear, there could be no darkness if there were not such a thing as light, or folly if there were no wisdom, and is not excellent holines thus evidently made known in its opposit, to which there could be no contrariety, if it self were not most real.

5. That the truth seems so much entangled in a confusion of contrary doctrins, and we see without ceasing, pursued by error, and the assault of these adversaries who

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in every age are seeking to darken the same, can be no ground of prejudice, and shaking; without a strange mistake, but should strengthen the godly in their way, and help them to wax stronger, who have the Scripture thus so expressly fulfilled before their eyes; It is sure the Lord hath made his way plain, nor does that blessed record give any ground to turn aside unto crooked paths; for these are clouds of mens own creating, which have such a tendency to darken the same; but we see truth in all ages, waited on by error which with any brighter discovery thereof, breaks up like a thick fogge; though these can never unit, no more then gold and clay can joyne together; and it is clear, the notion of error, were unconceivable, if the truth had not a certainty and real being, nor doeth it conflict with such an adversary, but for its further triumph; oh if the solid perswasion of the Scripture, were in earnest pursued, and mens soul once brought under the power and authority of the truth, as that, which is the word and testimony of the living God, it would prove a more effectual cure, to so dreadful a distemper of the Church then all the disputes of the time, (which are of special use also) may not Atheism be found upon a serious inquiry, the great rise of error, and of mens bold adventuring to make the Scripture of God a sport of their invention, to make it subservient to their interest, and run after such a byass, and should it not be for a lamentation, that a humble serious inquiry after the truth, under an awful impresson of that God whose word it is, is this day so rare a thing in the World, now this being so sharp a trial of the Church, and one of these things whereat many pretend to be most shaken, though I have in an other part touched it a little, I would adde further some few remarks, how clear and express a confirmation of the word even this is, which should more fix and establish these who love the truth, 1. It is manifest, that no error, or corrupt doctrine assaulls the Church, but is in such a manner pointed forth, yea by

so express an opposition thereto, in the Scripture, that we may see a propheticall forewarning thereof, and of mens endeavour to corrupt and darken such a piece of the truth: it is sure the word is written and in a special way directed to every time of the Church, and to all her after trials, and assaults, is peculiarly suited, by him who knew & did foresee what opposition his truth in after ages should meet with, and in this marvelous record, men may clearly see (if there were such a serious inquiry) that there is no poison or corruption in doctrine which infests the Church, but hath its proper antidote there provided. I must hereas to one particular instance say, if I were not perswaded of a determined species of government for the Church under the new Testament (which is clear in the Scripture, holding forth its constitution to be Aristocratick, with a parity amongst the officers of Jesus Christ in the administration of their power, and a subordination of the lesser parts to the greater) I could not thin so clear a remarke, of that expresse prohibition, of any disparity and Lordly prelacy in his house, yea how manifestly the all seeing God, when he was about to found the Christian Church doeth point in such plain terms at this, that we may there read a very direct prediction of that ruin and prejudice it would on this account sustain in after times; I speak this on no particular interest, or from bitterness and prejudice at the persons of any, but have confidence to say, it is from the awe and perswasion of the truth: sure on politick grounds, and with respect to an outward interest, it is easy to judge, that way wants not a perswading bait, if something greater were not to preponderate, and a destroying hook did not wait thereon, which should make the purchase too dear, at the rate of denying Jesus Christ in a piece of his truth, when a confession thereof is called for before men. 2. Doe we not see even in these things, which in that marvellous depth of error and delusion on mens soul seem most strange, the Scripture thence most exactly confirmed, and in that power and energy which attends it, and is to many matter

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matter of astonishment, may discern how these clouds are carried about with a tempest, *2 Pet. 2. 17.* and driven on by a judicial stroke, and though it is amazing to see at what a rate many are this way turned mad, with a discernable bewitching of their judgment, & a besotting into most strange and absurd extravagancies, yea how tenacious and violent in their way, when silenced with the clearest discoveries of the truth, yet is not this also witnessed, there is a righteous God giving up to strong delusion, in which Satan is let loose with a remarkable power to deceive. *2 Thes. 2. 12.* O how dreadful is that stroke which is inflicted on the judgment and reason, which in some respect we may say is greater then that which is on the affections. 3. Finde we not the Scripture by a clear propheticall discovery, point at that influence humane authority, & the patrociny of such, who have a name and reput in the Church, should have on the corrupting the doctrine thereof, & therefore does the Holy Ghost, so particularly guard against the same, and oppose the authority of the written word to the highest pretences of any party; that here an Apostle must not be admitted or have credit to the truths prejudice, not an Angel, yea not a voice from heaven, may oppose it self to this more sure testimony of God in his word. 4. Is it not here even in that great depth of error we see this truth take place, deceiving and being deceived, how strangely these meet, and by a marvellous stroke, mens judgment made captive to their will, & their deliberat acting to deceive others have the same effect on themselves. 5. Thus also is the Scripture made out, where we see how hard it is for men to fix in such a way, or finde land when they are once carried off the truth, and do lanch out in that horrid gulf of error, but seducers wax worse and worse.

Inference. V. The truth of God revealed in the Scripture is in its import not more marvellous and great, then we may say is clear and obvious in the evidence of its verification, which hath every where such a witnes, that there can be no escape from this

discovery, but if men will not receive its testimony, they must have it forced on them as their torment, for it is here invention doth fail, and politicks are found too weak, to ward off some impression of that, which with an awful appearance and authority, does justify it self to the conscience without their consent, nor can this secure them from that lash of inward terror, which will make these tremble alone, when they seem to have confidence before others, but this advantage hath the truth of her adversaries, that even Atheism must bear a witness thereto, and against it self, which if men would but weigh in the ballance of sober reason, it should appear a sufficient antidote against its own poison, and a great seal to the Scripture, which would want a special confirmation, if it wanted such an adversary, now to clear it a little more, and thus shut up what hath been on this subject held forth, I must in behalf of the glorious truth of God (which in all ages of the Church did never want some discovery of its accomplishment) attest the reproachers of this time who are so much at work to challenge his unspotted way, and call in question his faithfulness, to the weakning of the assent of many thereto, and do appeal them to that tribunal which the great God hath placed in the conscience, if they can without doing violence thereto, and putting forth the eye of reason, withstand the clear evidences of divine truth, and the certainty of its performance, anent which these few I shall here adde.

First, If it be the great prerogative of God, and to him alone belongs, to declare things from the beginning to the end, and hold forth the various and most remarkable events, which should fall out within time, with their proper circumstances, yea to discover the great revolutions of the world though all the ages thereof, when second causes in their remotest tendency thereto could not be discerned, is not this then clear and undenyably

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mony, they denyably true of the Scripture? 2. As to the sure and exact performance of the same, I must make that challenge and attestation, which that great servant of the Lord Joshua, did in such a cause, *Jos. 23. 14.* if any thing hath hitherto failed, of all which the Lord hath spoken in the Scripture; or if men can instance, what special prediction, or promise, (which to this day should have taken place in the season thereof) hath miscarried, or turned abortive, what truth wants its seal and confirmation, yea what step of providence, can you point at which does not quadrat, and marvellously accord with the word, I challenge an instance, but this I am sure men must see, there are such things fall out in the event, that are particularly foretold in the Scripture, so strange and marvellous, that in an ordinary way none could have believed, which they now see with their own eyes.

3. Do you not see the written word as a bright lantern attend the Church, from the very porch and entry of time, in all her journey, and evidently point at the remarkable times, and revolutions of her case, which havenow in a great part gone over her head: yea is it not demonstratively clear, that the sun doth not more truly shine on this terrestrial globe, then the Scripture shineth, and doth illuminat the whole frame and structure of providence, and in all these strange parts which are acted in the world, most certainly takes place, that there is none can walk at random, or by his own counsel direct and steer his course, but though it is marvellous it is sure also, that the innumerable millions of men who are this day upon earth, in all their various motions, are at present fulfilling the determined counsel of God; and their actions (what ever they design therein must be concentrick with his great end, nor out of that bounds can they possibly move.

4. I must attest the world, if they do not see, this way of godlines, which seems to day to be every where spoken against, to be that good and old way, in which are the footsteps of the Saints to be found since the begin-

beginning, and that it is no new light now brok up in the world; but it is clear, through al ages past, there hath not wanted a continued succession, of these who in this reproached way did serve the God of their fathers; and have sealed the truth, which now from one time, to an other, we finde still delivered off their hands, to the present generation; and I here challenge the greatest Atheists, to which of the Saints can they turn, or whom can they instance of that blessed company, since there was a Church in the earth, who could ever contradict this, or bear an other witness. 5. Must you not confesse there is no such deep, in the heart of man, or so close and subtil a convoy of wickednes there, which is not found out in the Scripture, and there pointed at; and that none can get themselves hid, or get byond the reach of this, in these things which they are sure the observing world could never know, but the most secret haunts of their soul are unvailed, which from their dearest friend they have concealed. 6. Can this demonstration of the Scripture, and so manifest a witness thereto be denyed, that whilst man is a free agent in his actions, and doth therein act spontaneously, he hath notwithstanding of this in his own breast both a judge, and accuser, which though within him, doth without his consent, exercise a power over him, and such an authority which he would, yet cannot decline. 7. I dare attest the conscience of men, who are themselves strangers to the way of God, if they can so far shut their eyes, but they must see serious godlines is a marvellous thing & that there is something here above nature, which by its effects on others, may shew a divine Spirit and power, that whereever it comes makes so great a change, and one to exceed an other most discernably though of the same parts, that suits and does accommodat it self to the various conditions and employments of men, it puts a special honor on the greatest Prince, and does instruct the wise and prudent, yet will it lodge with the poorest artificer in his shop, or labouring man in the field; and does it not also appear, that here must be

be a native motion and unconstrained, from inward principles, when on outward grounds there is not the least intimation, which shews it is a living thing, that hath its discernable languishing, and wearing out, and its more vigorous actings, as well as any living man; it is strange there-
 port of this, is not matter of astonishment, to bring men once to question, if such an account as others give of this marvellous thing, religion, can be true, how it is here the Christians joy is lowen by weeping, and his tears the seed whence gladnes of heart breaks up; how sweet that rest is which is found in his work and labour; and with his sowing to the spirit, the harvest then begins, in a present reaping, and his laying forth himself, with a giving of the heart unto God, does enrich the giver by such a gift: yea that here men should differ so much when alone with God and brought near him from what they are at other times, and in these retirements of their soul, have that discovery and conception of this truth, which is not to be found in turning over the voluminous tracts of the greatest writers. 8. If men have any serious reflection, and doe not shut up the bible, can they shun this remark thereof; How well it answers the various successions of time, and so marvellous a variety of things that are so many ages distant from other, yea that all alongst there is a gradual discovery and breaking up of the gospel in the several times of the Church, where it is easy to discern the antiquity of this excellent record, and so great a distance of time betwixt the penmen thereof, yet in its composure is one entire piece, so connex and closely knit together, that men may see the same spirit in the whole, & in each part thereof, moving and carrying forward one great design. 9. I shall but further adde, if Religion hath a being and reality, which men can not lose the sense of, and deny, without falling so far below reason, into the condition of the beasts, must there not be a rule also? for it is easy to judge in what a strange and monstrous shape this would appear, were it left to the choice and arbitrement of men;

men, now let the most professed Atheists turn their eyes though the whole earth, and in a calm, and sober composition of spirit but judge, if there be any thing more absurd, and to astonishment irrational, then that face and appearance religion hath amongst these where this excellent rule of the Scripture is not owned, yea could these subject themselves to such extravagancies and therein turn so mad, without a divine stroke on their judgment and reason, which the righteous God in verification of his word inflicts on such who do even shut their ears, from the report of the truth, the sound whereof goes forth through the earth, and here I challenge men though strangers themselves to serious religion, if at a distance it doth not appear, how great a difference there is betwixt these parts of the world, where the gospel shines in its power; and the rest of the nations.

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I N D E X.



HE grave subject of the Scriptures accomplishment considered in some special truths, previously held forth for giving light to the same.

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